

S E R M O N S

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

AND

PREACHED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

BY THE LATE

Rev^d. THO^s. FRANCKLIN, D. D.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY to his MAJESTY, and RECTOR
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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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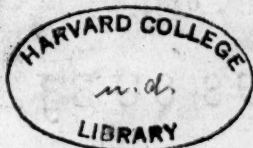
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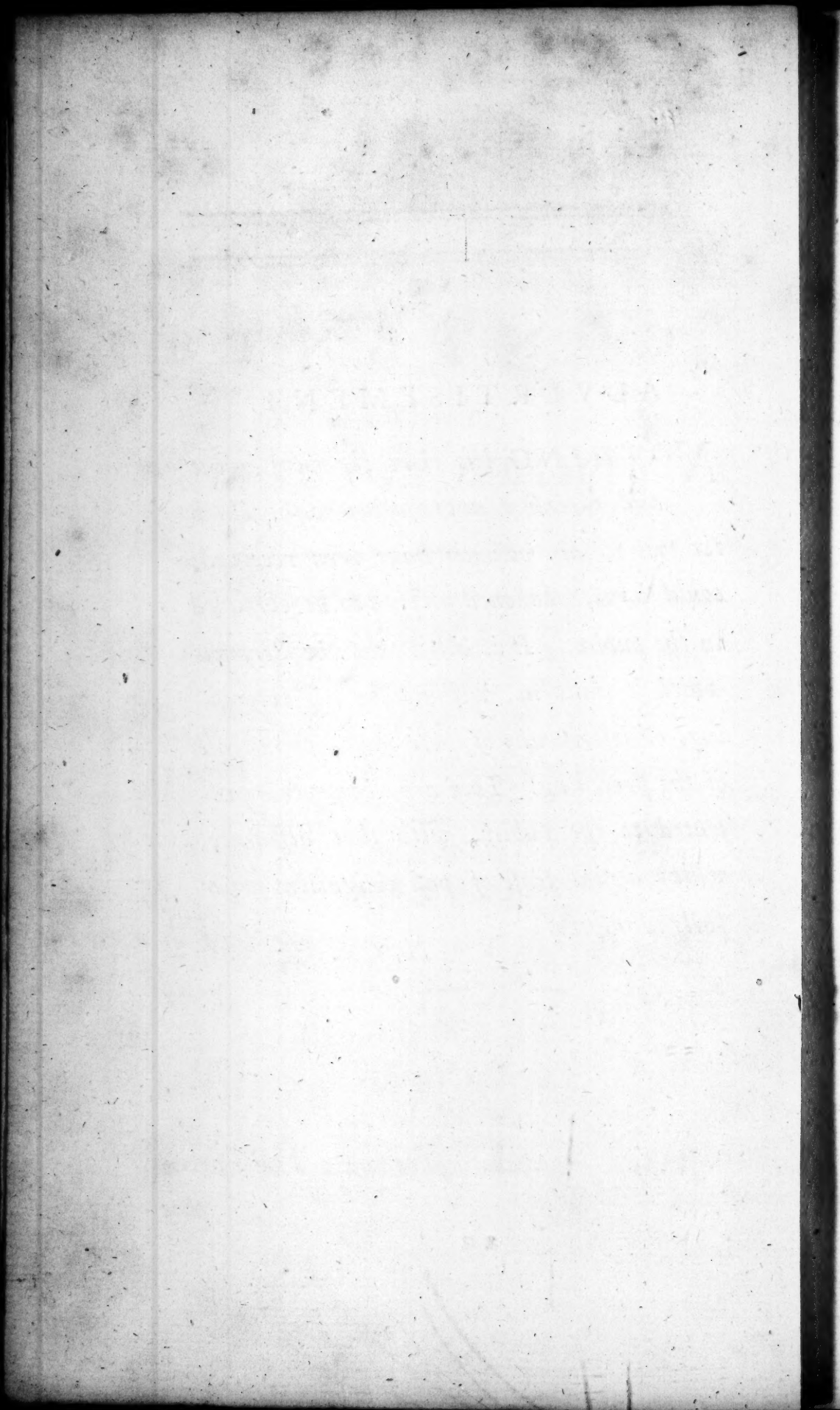
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ADVERTISEMENT.

NOTHING less than the very great and extensive approbation with which the two former volumes have been received, could have occasioned a third to be obtruded on the public. It is hoped that the Sermons which it contains, will not be less interesting, or less worthy of patronage, than those of the preceding. They are, however, presented to the public, with that diffidence, which a real sense of past obligations never fails to inspire.



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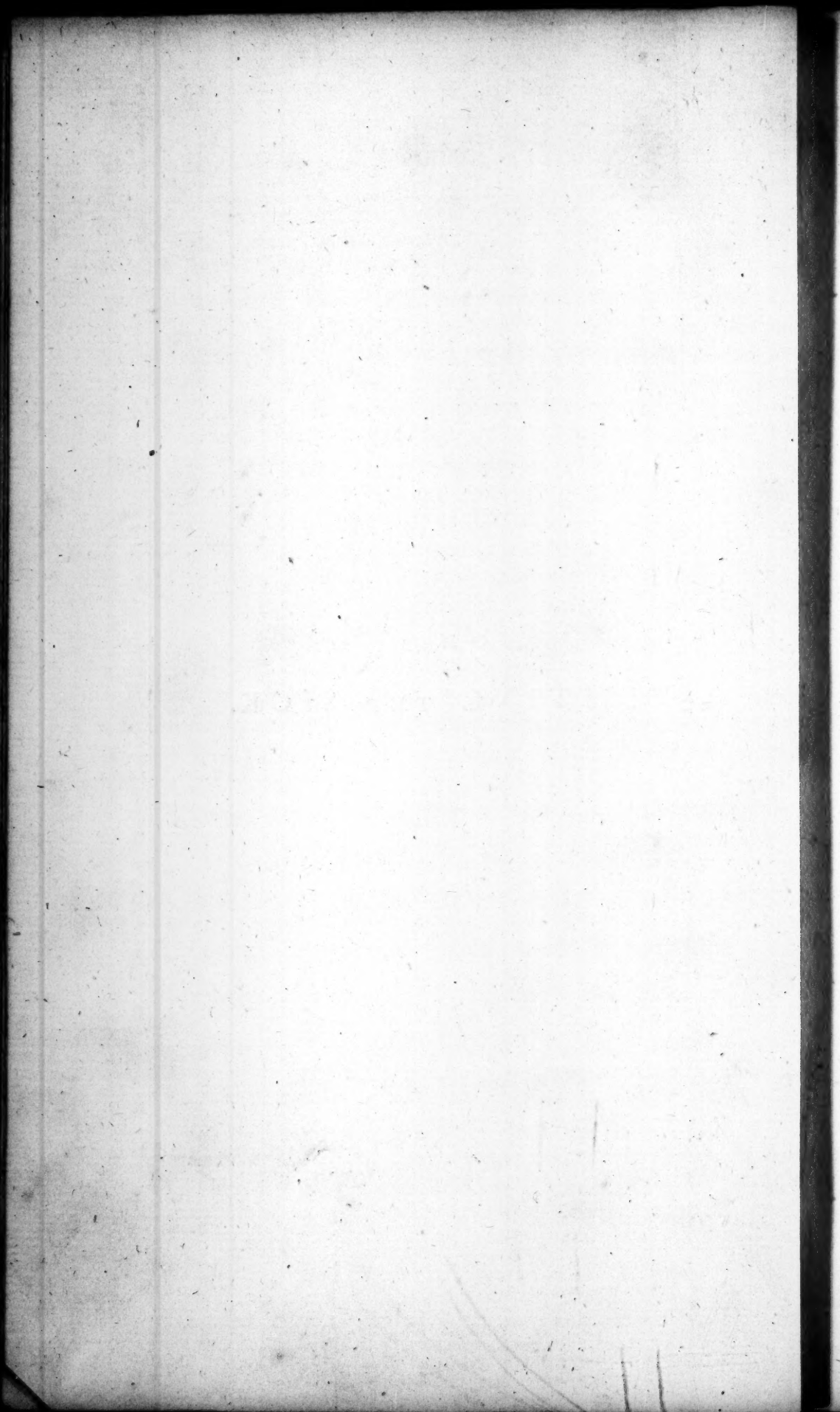
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ON
VISITING THE SICK.



S E R M O N I.

M A T T. XXV. 36.

I was sick and ye visited me.

WHEN we seriously consider the frail, corrupt, and distressful state of human nature, when we reflect on the general lot and portion of mortality, to what variety of evils we are subject, and how many enemies we have to contend with, how few things there are in this life which can impart real and substantial happiness; and on the other hand, how many are pregnant with misery and sorrow; we are naturally led

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to

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I.



to imagine that it must be the business, the interest, and concern of every individual to lighten as much as possible the general burthen; that every office of tenderness and humanity to our fellow-creatures would of course be daily and punctually performed by every one of us; well knowing that all the poor aid and assistance which each particular could lend, would still be but little and insignificant preservatives against universal calamity, as the most that we can do is but to soften that distress which we cannot prevent, and to soothe those sorrows which we cannot remove.

Amongst all those duties, therefore, which are inspired by benevolence, taught by natural, or commanded by revealed religion, there is not one which can lay a stronger claim to our observance than that which is inculcated in
my

my text, the duty of visiting the sick, so strongly and pathetically enforced by our blessed Saviour himself, who not only recommended, but constantly and assiduously performed it: on the discharge of this kind and friendly office he hath more than once assured us, no less depends than our eternal happiness and salvation; those who do it shall be set on his right hand, and those who neglect it, on his left, when he shall come in his glory to judge the world, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Permit me therefore, in the following discourse, to lay before you a few of those arguments which will most strongly recommend to you the serious consideration of this necessary and important duty.

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1st, By pointing out to you the many benefits and advantages resulting from it to our fellow-creatures ; and

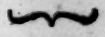
2dly, The manifest tendency which it hath to promote our own interest and happiness, both here and hereafter.

And first, therefore, I shall take this opportunity to consider the benefits and advantages which will accrue to others, the relief and comfort which we bestow on our fellow-creatures.

Whether it be owing to the false philosophy of some pernicious writers, who have risen up of late years to confound virtue and vice, and put religion out of countenance, or to the natural depravity of mankind, heightened and enflamed by bad example, or both together, is hard to determine ; but certain
it

it is, that we are at present so lost in the idle amusements, or corrupted by the follies of the age, that almost all the ties of nature are broken through and contemned, and social love and affection banished from the breasts of men. We are so deeply engaged in the vanities and impertinencies of life, that we have no time left for the duties of it; so constantly employed in visiting those who neither want nor desire it, that we totally neglect those who do; we partake, in short, of every table but the table of love, and go to every house but the house of mourning; men are but too well acquainted with the pleasures, the vices, and faults of their neighbours, and are only strangers to their sorrows and misfortunes.

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I.



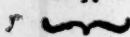
The loose and unthinking manner in which so many spend their irrevocable

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hours

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hours is not only the cause of half the cruel disorders which fall upon them, but tends also, in a great measure, to make the burthen heavier and more intolerable; the more habituated we are to pleasure, the more impatient shall we be under the discipline of pain or sickness; and the greater the change is, the more intense must be our sensation of it. How unhappy then must those be who fall from the summit of health and plenty into the melancholy state of sickness or adversity, and who at the same time that they are depressed are generally deserted also! for thousands who are glad to partake of the joys and happiness of others, will refuse to bear a part in their sufferings and affliction.

The good and virtuous alone are capable of true friendship.

Observe

Observe the connections which arise between the gay and dissolute; connections which spring from casual scenes of mirth, luxury, and intemperance; mark how soon the knot is loosed, and how quickly the union is dissolved. It springeth up in the morning, and in the evening is cut down, dried up, and withered; the same change which produced, frequently destroys and puts an end to it; as the holy Psalmist beautifully expresseth it, *It is like the grass which groweth on the house-top, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom.*

Whilst on the other hand,

No ties are so strong and binding as those produced by sympathy and compassion: sorrow hath an attractive quality, which insensibly draws together the minds of the tender and humane;

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I.



and when friendship thus calls in virtue to her aid, the union which they form is lasting, the bands which they knit are indissoluble.

The duty of visiting the sick, therefore, is always attended with this desirable consequence, that it confers obligations which never can be cancelled, and bestows benefits that never are forgotten, cements friendships already made, and creates new ones that are lasting and permanent.

The duty notwithstanding now before us is too often neglected as useless and unnecessary : a crowd, says the unfeeling man, at such times, is disagreeable, and company superfluous ; converse then is loathing, and cheerfulness impertinent : but this is surely rather the weak excuse of languid indifference, or the cold suggestion

gestion of unfeeling philosophy. Hath not the wise man assured us, that even the moving of the lips can assuage grief? Experience must convince us, that in the bitterness of pain and sickness no balm is so efficacious as the balm of tenderness, no draught so invigorating as the cordial of friendship. The health of the patient may depend as much on the hand that administers, as on the physician who prescribes the remedy; and I appeal to the hearts of all who have languished under any of those cruel distempers our weak frames are liable to, if ever the sight of those they valued and esteemed was so pleasing to their eyes, or the voice of those they loved so grateful to their ears, as when they came in that melancholy hour to visit and relieve them.

But

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I.

But secondly, Though we might even suppose it possible (dreadful as the supposition is) to lay aside our humanity, and utterly to forget and neglect our duty towards our neighbour, let us at least consider what I proposed to point out to you as a most powerful inducement to the practice of this virtue, namely, the manifest tendency which it hath to promote our own interest, welfare, and happiness both here and hereafter.

And the first great benefit and advantage resulting from this humane and charitable employment is, that it may in a great measure serve to wean our affections from the things of this world; to humanise and soften our dispositions, dispose our thoughts towards such objects as might otherwise seldom enter
into

into them, call off our attention from
scenes of gaiety and dissipation, and fix
them on that heaven where, and where
only, true joys are to be found.

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I.

Experience doth sufficiently convince
us that there is no school like the school
of affliction, that sickness is the best of
masters, and no instructors so well qua-
lified to teach morality, as pain and
sorrow.

Let then the dissolute and abandoned
man quit the chambers of riot and de-
bauchery for a bed of sickness; convey
him from the palaces of joy to the re-
gions of sorrow and affliction; let him
look upon his disconsolate brother, la-
bouring under some sore diseases, and
lamenting perhaps the guilty cause of all
his sufferings: and then let him return,
if he can, to the sons of Belial, and go
on

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on in the fatal pursuit of his destructive pleasures.

To this scene let us send the man of vaunted learning and knowledge, who boasts his superior wisdom, and looks down with contempt on the ignorant and illiterate: shew him one, perhaps but a few hours ago much wiser and more learned than himself, now languishing in a state of weakness and insensibility. Behold that mind which was once so rich deprived of all its treasures, all its ideas obliterated and effaced, all its knowledge vanished away. Bid the scholar turn over this instructive page; bid him look over this moral treatise, and be wise; bid him read this important lesson, and be humble.

Go to this school, attend this duty, thou that art swollen with ambition, or
enflamed

enflamed by avarice; ask the sick man, where are the riches that can purchase ease, or where is the power that can conquer pain? Then turn into thy own bosom and ask thyself, whether the things thou art so warmly in pursuit of, are worth thy toil and assiduity? whether thou wilt be sure of happiness if thou hast them, or must of necessity be miserable if thou hast them not? And above all, remember to ask thyself this important question, whether such poor and transitory bliss as they can afford, should be purchased at the dear expence of thy innocence and virtue?

But another and that no inconsiderable advantage arising from the practice of this duty, is that inward complacency and satisfaction of our own minds, which it never fails to produce.

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I.



The joy which ariseth from sensual gratifications is momentary and transient, confined within the narrow limits of a short fruition; whilst the performance of this, and of every other social virtue, carries with it a pleasing reflection that extends itself to futurity, and every time it recurs, creates fresh pleasure and added satisfaction; to a mind therefore rightly disposed, the house of mourning is a fairer habitation than the gorgeous tents of ungodliness: the kind and benevolent repose themselves with as much ease on a bed of sickness, as on the couch of luxury and intemperance; in the cup of affliction there is always something sweet thrown in by the hand of Providence; and the very tears of Virtue can administer more true and solid satisfaction, than Vice and Folly have it in their power to bestow.

Com-

Compassion, we must acknowledge, is a debt which we all owe to our fellow-creatures when under the rod of affliction, and like other debts will always leave an uneasiness on the mind of every honest and conscientious man, till he has faithfully discharged it. But when it is paid as it ought to be, that self-applause and secret satisfaction which ariseth from it will make us ample retribution.

But if the motives of reason and religion are not of themselves (and too often it happens that they are not) sufficient to persuade us to the practice of this duty, that self-love and self-interest which reign in every breast, will most powerfully exhort us to the execution of it.

The tear which we refuse to shed over the miseries of others, God, and God only,

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I.

only, knows how soon we may ourselves stand in need of: how often doth an unexpected stroke of sickness put an end to the enjoyment of every human happiness, and change the cheerful scene of joy and comfort into a melancholy state of misery and despair! In one day, nay in one hour, the lustre of the eye shall be extinguished, the bloom of health shall wither, and the voice of mirth and gladness shall be suppressed. If therefore we do not visit and compassionate those who are in sickness and sorrow, when we ourselves are overtaken by them, who shall pity or compassionate us? Then shall we call to mind perhaps the afflictions of Joseph, and say as his brethren did, when they came into trouble: *We are very guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and would not bear, therefore is this distress come upon us.*

How

How great an aversion soever the gay SERM.
I.
and unthinking part of mankind may 
have to all that carries with it the appearance of grave or melancholy, it may notwithstanding with truth be asserted, that he who is a stranger to sorrow, is a stranger also to the best emotions, the noblest feelings which the human heart is capable of receiving.

There is, we must have observed, in some persons a remarkable tenderness of disposition, and a delicacy of sensation which those whom we falsely term the brave and resolute never experience; a disposition which however we may sometimes ridicule and despise, is what in the end will most intimately unite and endear them to us. Those qualities which in the wantonness of health and prosperity are apt to raise our laughter and contempt, in the hour of sickness or

SERM.

I.



adversity, shall meet with our esteem and approbation. The truth indeed is, the value of this blessing, like that of every other, is found only by its absence; and we seldom know the true value of humanity and compassion, till we come to feel the want of them.

But lastly, and to conclude.

If we are kind, tender, and affectionate to our friends and neighbours in the trying hours of sickness and adversity, we shall not only meet in return with *their* pity and attendance on *us*, when we fall into the like calamity, but we shall also find a better and more powerful friend than this world can afford to aid and support us. Our blessed Saviour hath himself assured us, that in as much as we shew this tenderness and humanity towards our fellow-creatures, we shew it
unto

unto *him*. If the naked whom we have clothed should not remember the benefit bestowed, he will himself discharge the debt, and repay us for them. If the sick whom we have visited, when restored to health, ungratefully forget the friendly visitor, *he* will not forget, but will come himself to return the obligation; the Lord himself will make our bed in sickness; he will enable us with courage to bear with strength, perhaps to conquer, the disease, when we have struggled through sorrow, pain, sickness and adversity. He will lead us to a blessed habitation, where there shall be no pain or adversity, no diseases to afflict the body, no sorrow to depress the mind, where joys untainted and incorruptible shall meet, where health unimpaired and uninterrupted shall finally and everlastingly reward us.

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I.



To those glorious and eternal mansions of celestial happiness, after all our sickness, pain, and sorrow here, may the God of peace, health, and joy, conduct us all, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

O N

P R A Y E R,

S E R M O N I I.

M A R K X. 38.

*Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what
ye ask.*

TH E S E words of our blessed Sa-
viour are a severe rebuke on two
of his disciples. James and John, the
sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying,
*Master, we would that thou shouldest do
for us whatsoever we shall desire; and he
said unto them, what would ye that I
should do for you? and they said unto
him, grant unto us that we may sit one at
thy right hand, and the other at thy left
hand, in thy glory.* Not content, it
seems, with the humble hopes of future
happiness in the mansions of the blest,

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II.

SERM.
II.

they were for aspiring to the highest and most exalted station, to be placed on each side the throne of glory, and next in honour and dignity to their great Redeemer; a request which he, no doubt, thought highly unreasonable. And, accordingly, says St. Mark, he said unto them, *ye know not what ye ask*; by which he gave them to understand, that he thought their demands exorbitant; that the kingdom of heaven was not a thing to be acquired with so much ease, or so readily to be granted, as their vanity and self-conceit seemed to flatter them; nay, that it was not even *his* to give, but that God the Father would prepare it for them, and them only, whose superior merits should entitle them to a participation of it.

Now, though these words were at that time addressed solely to James and John,
they

they may, I think, with the utmost propriety be applied, and perhaps were at first meant by our Saviour himself, as a warning to all mankind; a deserved censure on all the exorbitant desires, extravagant wishes, and idle prayers, which men from time to time pour out before the Divine Being.

As prayer, therefore, has always been looked upon as the indispensable duty of every Christian, it may not be improper in this place to endeavour to remove any errors which may have crept into the practice of so important and solemn an office of our religion, and to lead men into a right method in the performance of it.

As man is a being too insufficient of himself to supply his own wants, so is he for the most part too ignorant even to
know

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II.



know them; ever too solicitous for the attainment of those things which are most useless and insignificant; too indolent and remiss in the search of that on which his happiness does more immediately depend. As a servant, therefore, it is his duty to intreat his Master's favour and protection; as a creature, it is his interest to address his Creator. And herein the nature of those gifts which we require at the hands of God is carefully to be considered, lest, if we ask amiss, we receive not.

We must be extremely cautious of requesting any thing unfit for God to grant, or for us to implore; for if we seriously reflect on the divine mercy, and on our own unworthiness, the proudest and the most selfish will be obliged to confess, that we have most of us, though not as much as we desire, yet as much perhaps
as

as we really stand in need of, and all of us infinitely more than even the best can deserve. We should never, therefore, apply to God for any thing which we have *not*, without first thanking him for what we *have*. Of the ten cripples mentioned by the apostle, nine *prayed*, whilst the tenth *praised* God; and him, we are told, our Saviour regarded most.

In regard to prayer and thanksgiving, which, though it is to be feared, are not, yet ought always to be inseparable, it may be affirmed, that not to acknowledge the enjoyments and privileges we have received, and hold of God, is in effect to deny that we receive them from him; and not to apply to him for what we stand in need of, is to deny either our own indigence, or his power of removing it.

Were

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II.



Were our sense of favours received equal to our wants, our prayers perhaps would be fewer, and our thanksgivings in much greater number; but poverty and necessity is the common lot of all mankind, whilst gratitude and generosity are confined to the few.

When men remove from the busy scene of life, from the noise and bustle of the world, to retire into themselves, to consult their own breasts, and address themselves in prayer to the Supreme Being; when they kneel before their Maker, should not the thought of his presence, of laying open our hearts to, and conversing with our great Creator, strike an awe upon the mind sufficient to banish every wicked, and every idle thought, and fit our tempers and dispositions for so solemn an occasion? But it is even then, perhaps, when the
secret

secret desires of men, which had been long brooding in their minds, begin to shew and form themselves into prayer; it is even then too often that they are most unguarded and extravagant, and offend God the most, even in the very act of worshipping him.

Now in this great act of devotion there are several ways by which we may offend God, and prejudice ourselves; several methods, whose effects duly considered, may serve to convince us, that because we ask amiss, we receive not. We may ask for what we do not want, for what we do not deserve, for what may be hurtful to ourselves, or pernicious to others.

“As it asketh some knowledge,” says the great Bacon, “to demand a question not impertinent, so it requireth some

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II.



some sense to make a wish not absurd." Now, what is said of wishes, which are the secret prayers of the mind, may very properly be applied to prayer itself.

Give us all good things unasked, and avert from us every evil one, though we beg for it, was a celebrated prayer of the ancients; and in reality, to ask for what we do not want, to point out every particular blessing we would have bestowed on us, is an affront to that power to whom we offer up our prayers; we deny one of his attributes whilst we apply to him for the exertion of another; for what is it in effect but doubting his omniscience, not to suppose he is as well or much better acquainted with our necessities than ourselves?

Nothing

Nothing perhaps could more effectually conduce to our ruin, nothing would in all probability render us more perfectly miserable, than the success of all our vows, the completion of all our foolish and unreasonable desires; and it is hard to determine whether the goodness and mercy of the Almighty is most visible in bestowing on us that which we do *not* ask for, or denying us what we *do*.

But that the vanity of human desires, and the extravagancy of inconsiderate prayers, may appear the more evident to us, let us take a cursory view of the most frequent objects of them.

Riches and power are, it must be allowed, the favourite, the darling blessings most generally in the mouths, as well as in the hearts of the greatest part of

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II.


of mankind; and yet, who but God can determine; who but he can possibly foreknow whether those riches will make us happy, or that power truly great? Nay, upon deliberation, are they not much more likely to make us miserable? Our passions, like the appetites of sick men, are generally bent and fixed on that which will be most pernicious to us. The covetous man implores God by increasing his revenues, to add fuel to his avarice, and the prodigal wearies heaven with prayers, to grant him an opportunity of shortening his guilty days, and sinking under the weight of sin and misery.

When life is so full of real unavoidable ills, is it not strange that men should, with so much warmth and eagerness, beg for misery, and sue for ruin and destruction; that they should
thus

thus frustrate their own designs by the very means they make use of to promote them?

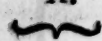
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II.

But things are apt to dazzle at a distance, or to deceive us when nigh, through a false glass, which, when brought close and examined, lose their form, and become a dead mass without colour or beauty.

Riches are often but a kind of wandering-fire, that leads us astray into the paths of vice and folly; and power given to the weak, or to the wicked, is but as a sword in the hands of a madman, which for a while throws terror and destruction round about, and then is pointed against the breast of him that wears it.

Again, if we turn our eyes towards the candidates for glory and empire

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among the great, what poor and unsatisfactory pleasures, what mean and trifling rewards does ambition bestow upon her votaries ! Care encircles her crowns, and terror haunts her palaces ; her feasts are poisoned with fear, and her triumphs checked by conscience, and we cry out with the wise man, *surely this is vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

But surely, say some, there are perfections, there are some real and solid pre-eminences in human nature, which cannot but be the reasonable object of our wishes, the commendable and proper subject of our prayers ; children, health, long life, reputation, and knowledge, bid fair for this character. But even these, I fear, without proper restrictions, will upon a closer inspection, and stript of the gaudy dress our fancies are pleased to bestow on them, appear
by

by no means so desirable as we were at first inclined to think them.

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II.

Children and the fruit of the womb are a blessing; *they are like the arrows in the hand of the giant*, says the Psalmist; *happy is he that hath his quiver full of them*; but alas! what bitter waters have flowed even from this fountain of delight! What if duty and affection change to perverseness and disobedience; what if these arrows turn against our own breasts? Then where is the father's envied happiness; where are all his dreams of promised pleasure, when those who should support his age, and bring honour to his name, disgrace his family, wound his fair reputation, and bring his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave?

But are not health and long life to be desired? are these also among the

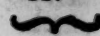
SERM.
II.


things we should not ask? are they not the source of every pleasure, and productive of every happiness? Health, though the offspring of exercise and sobriety, may become the mother of sloth and intemperance; it may indeed aid and strengthen virtue, but it may likewise heighten and inflame our passions, and lead us into the paths of vice. And on the other hand, if it shall please God in his mercy to chastise us, to lend his gracious hand to stop us in our career of folly and wickedness, sickness may be the greatest blessing he can bestow upon us. Experience convinces us, that men are much more likely to mend by feeling what they *are*, than by being told what they *ought* to be. When the king of terrors, therefore, is approaching towards us, sickness is sent to prepare the way before him, to subdue our passions, to wean our affections from the world,

to

to give us time for reflection and re-
pentance, that we may not drop into
eternity with all our imperfections on
our heads, but slide into the grave with
a more easy and insensible motion, and
calmly resign our life into the hands of
him that gave it.

SERM.
II.



The love of life itself is indeed so
strictly united to our nature, so interwoven
as it were with our very frame and con-
stitution, that the desire of prolonging
it is, we must own, by no means to be
wondered at; and yet the folly of man-
kind is not perhaps in any thing more
conspicuous than in their extreme tena-
ciousness of it. Length of days may be
far from a blessing to the best of us: the
beauty of the circle doth not consist so
much in the size, as in the completeness
if it; and the smallest parts of nature
shew as much harmony in themselves,

SERM.

II.



and as much perfection in the Maker, as the largest and most considerable: but in this, as in all our actions, we shew our own weakness and inconsistency. We pray for age, and when it comes, complain of its attendants, its melancholy train of woes and misery; years bring sorrow and heaviness, the weight of them is grievous, the burthen of them is intolerable.

But one thing then remains to be considered, which the wise and witty of the world will be loth to give up as an improper object of our prayers, and that is, knowledge. To excel the rest of mankind in that which distinguishes us from brutes, is surely of all things the most desirable; and if our gratitude should rise in proportion to the benefit received, what infinite praise and thanksgiving is due to God from those whose
parts

parts and understanding have placed them above the common level! But it is a melancholy truth, that God is not more careful to make our greatest misfortunes conducive to our happiness, than we are to change his blessings into curses.

SERM.
II.

Such is the lot of our nature, that we are forced to be upon our guard even against the perfections of it. Those whom we falsely term the wisest, are not always the best of men; the little knowledge we have to boast of, makes us vain and insolent; the fair fruits of learning and science are eat up and destroyed by the cankers of pride and arrogance. Men too frequently make use of their reason to vilify and degrade the Author of it, and brandish the weapons of truth, religion, and virtue, in the cause of vice, falsehood, and infidelity.

SERM.
II.

What has been said may, I think, convince any impartial man, that in our prayers for particular blessings, which for the reasons above enumerated are perhaps better laid aside, we cannot be too cautious in using proper restrictions, lest we offend God and prejudice ourselves.

If then we pray for knowledge, let it be for the only true and valuable one, the knowledge of our own little selves, our weaknesses, our vices, and our ignorance, that we may know how little can be known, and that God will teach us to know him, and our duty to him.

If we pray unto him for riches, let us at the same time make it our earnest request that those riches may render us humane, charitable, and beneficent to our fellow-creatures; that if he gives us power, it may be the power of doing good;

good; if he showers down upon us fame, SERM.
II.
health, and long life, that that fame
may be an honest fame, and may raise
the emulation of all good men to follow
and to enjoy it; that that health may
inspire us with vigour and activity in the
execution of his commandments; and,
lastly, that as our days, our virtues may
increase, our passions subside, our fol-
lies wear away, and our souls become
day by day fitter for that blest habita-
tion, to the enjoyment of which they
were at first created, and towards which
they are so nearly approaching.

Besides the errors, and almost every
thing which has been urged on this sub-
ject, may serve to recommend to us the
great usefulness, beauty, and necessity,
of an established form of prayer, to keep
the folly and extravagance of men's de-
sires within due bounds, and put a stop

SERM.

II.

to all absurd, frivolous, and wicked prayers; in our private devotions, therefore, if we do not make use of the words of our own excellent liturgy, let us at least endeavour to retain the subject matter of it; and here I must observe, that in reality, after all our acts of public and private devotion, God will look upon a good life as the most effectual prayer that we can make to him: *it is not every one, says our Saviour, that saith unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father.*

With the great Searcher of Hearts there is more true, more persuasive eloquence in one noble and disinterested act of goodness and beneficence, than all the pomp of words which Rome and Athens could ever produce.

The

The Lord, who seeth in secret, will reward us openly; he is our shepherd, therefore shall we lack nothing; we have in heaven a kind Master, and an indulgent Father, the great Creator and Preserver of us all; to whom our interests are much dearer, as well as infinitely better known than to ourselves.

SERM.
II.


This thought must administer the greatest and most solid satisfaction to a right mind in every station and circumstance of life; it is this alone which can support us under sorrow, want, pain, or any other adversity; the blast of public censure, and all the malice of an ill-natured, designing world: this will soften the rigour of slavery, give a charm to health, and keep up our spirits under sickness and anguish, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. This will bring a man peace at the last, that
peace

SERM. peace which neither the world, nor the
II. importunate prayers of it, which none
in short, but our great and perpetual Benefactor, can bestow.

On him then let us cast our care, for he careth for us; let us not pretend to guide the Most High, or to direct the hand of the Almighty, but in all humility submit ourselves to his divine will, and only ask of him that which he in his wisdom shall think most proper and most convenient for us: He who knoweth our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, will have compassion on our infirmities; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; this, with all that we can want, he will vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

ON

V A N I T Y.

S E R M O N III.

ECCLES. II. I.

I said in my heart, go to now; I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure, and behold! this a'fo is—Vanity.

S OLOMON having proved to man-
kind by sad example the vanity of
human learning, that in much wisdom
there is much grief, and that he who in-
creaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow, is
inclined to try some other means of happi-
ness; he is resolved therefore to change
the scene, to quit the perplexing labyrinths
of science, the rough and thorny roads
which he had trodden so unsuccessfully,
and

SERM.
III.

SERM.
III.

and to turn aside into the inviting paths of luxury and pleasure: in consequence of this new determination we behold him searching industriously after every object that could amuse or divert him.

*I sought in my heart, says he, to give myself unto wine; I made me great works: I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I got me men-singers and women-singers, and all the delights of the sons of men: he laid himself open, in short, we may naturally suppose, to every folly, and plunged into every vice which his power gave him the opportunity to commit, or his inclination prompted him to enjoy; and what after all was the result of this conduct, and the effect of this resolution? Lost and bewildered in search of pleasures which he could not taste, and wearied in the pursuit of happiness which he could not obtain; he finds, after
all*

all his sanguine hopes, that he is miserably deceived and deluded, and concludes with the just but melancholy reflection, that this also was vanity.

Behold then the great idol of mankind, this beloved goddess, so universally admired and so zealously adored; branded, by the wisest of the sons of men, with the name of vanity; declared not only incapable of procuring happiness, but productive also of every error, and pregnant with every calamity.

Will it not then, my brethren, highly become us to pay some regard to so noble an authority, and some deference to so illustrious an example? will it not become us, on this occasion, seriously to consider what it was that could induce a judge so impartial to pass so severe a sentence, and so solemnly to declare, that

SERM.
III.

all human pleasure was nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit?

The judgment in question then, did most probably arise from a candid inquiry into, and a thorough conviction of the following particulars:

First, The insufficiency of all human pleasures to answer the end proposed by them.

Secondly, The dangerous and destructive consequences generally attendant on them; and

Thirdly, Their short, fleeting, and transitory nature.

And first, therefore, with regard to the insufficiency of all human pleasures to answer the end proposed by them.

The

The temple of pleasure is a kind of SERM.
III.
enchanted palace; the prospect at a distance never fails to invite the eye and to allure the senses: it seems adorned with all the beauties of nature, and all the improvements of art, with every thing, in short, that can soothe the soul, or flatter the imagination of man: but as we approach nearer to it, the flowers around it begin on a sudden to lose their sweets, and the earth its verdure; the pillars of this superb edifice sink as it were imperceptibly from our sight, the ornaments decay, and the whole visionary fabric moulders into ruin.

Whatsoever mine eyes desired, says Solomon, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold all

SERM.
III.

*was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there
was no profit under the sun.*

He gave himself, as he tells us, unto wine, and what was the consequence? The poison of guilt dropped into his cup of intemperance and embittered the delightful draught; instead of that social relaxation which he had sought, he was insensibly betrayed into riot and debauchery, and the end of all his mirth was heaviness. He builded himself houses and planted vineyards, and what was the effect? the work once perfected, the joy was at an end. The sight grew disagreeable by repetition, and the pleasure palled by satiety; and what Solomon experienced hath since been verified and illustrated by all mankind; every builder of houses, and every planter of vineyards since his time, has probably made the same reflection that he did, and
to.

to the end of time, will make the same, *that it is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit.* But besides what has here been advanced, it may be added, on this occasion, that all human enjoyments are in their nature unsatisfactory: there is always a void left in the heart, which cannot be filled up by any attainable good whatsoever, a something still desired and still unenjoyed; some tree of life in the garden which is untasted, prevents the enjoyment of every thing else. *The bed, as the scripture expresseth it, is shorter than that a man can stretch himself thereon, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself withal.* The feast of life, as Solomon no doubt experienced, even with all the dainties that nature can afford, hath not variety enough to bestow true and solid pleasure, its choicest delicacies are cloying, and we rise from it rather tired than satisfied.

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III.

But if the weakness and insufficiency of all human pleasures will not turn us aside from the constant pursuit of them, let us endeavour to rouse up our lethargic reason, and alarm our self-love, by a view of what I purposed secondly to consider—

The dangerous and destructive consequences which are generally attendant on them.

If we could set bounds to our appetites and passions; if we could say unto them, thus far shall ye go and no further; we might then perhaps enjoy our pleasures without guilt, and reflect on them without vexation: but when we are wandered into the delightful labyrinth of error, we are lost in the agreeable maze of folly, and every step we take but involves us in more danger, and leaves

us in more perplexity. The allurements of vice steal insensibly on our hearts, and lead us into the paths of sin and sorrow. If our pleasures then can only be purchased at the dear expence of our innocence and virtue, will Reason permit us to indulge in, will Religion warrant our pursuit of them?

The inevitable consequence of guilt we know is remorse, sorrow, and vexation; *the wicked*, as the prophet says, *are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* The worst of men may indeed find out methods of deceiving themselves for a time, and lull their senses into a short and momentary tranquillity. Mirth and gaiety may drown for a while the voice of conscience, but they will only make the return of it louder and more dissonant. Pleasure,

SERM.
III.
}

that grand specific, is but a kind of opiate, which numbs the distempered soul into a short slumber, and then awakens it to horror and to madness; to remove the cause is far beyond the powers of medicines so weak and insignificant. Nothing indeed can administer true and solid satisfaction to a mind that is stained with sin and blotted with corruption. The despiser of God's laws, the contemner of his word, the avowed dissolute and abandoned man, cannot possibly be happy.

But, to increase our sorrows and enhance our misfortune, it will become us to recollect, that not only that pleasure which arises from an indulgence in sensual gratifications, which partake of guilt and folly; but even those which have the sanction of reason to authorize, and the seal of innocence to protect them;

even

even those also are chastised by danger, and embittered by disappointment. How often do our own truth and sincerity make us dupes to the artifice and dissimulation of others! and how often do we enter into the strictest friendships, the tenderest connections with such as miserably deceive and betray us! It is indeed the hard lot of mankind, that though the commission of evil is generally attended with pain and sorrow, the avoidance of it is by no means certain to bring forth immediate joy or pleasure. Vice doth for the most part make us miserable, but it is not always in the power even of Virtue itself to make us happy.

But, thirdly and lastly, let us remember, That all the pleasures of human life are short, fleeting, and transitory.

Even

SERM.
III.

SERM.
III.



Even if they *could* impart that true and solid happiness which it is not in their power to bestow, they would scarce be worthy our acceptance, because the pain of quitting would more than compensate the satisfaction of enjoyment.

In our earlier years, when almost any thing will serve to amuse and divert, pleasure may trick herself for a time in borrowed charms, and allure the weak and thoughtless; but as we advance in the course, she generally loses her dazzling lustre, and betrays her decaying beauty.

Happiness may indeed with propriety be compared to a bird of passage, which visits us for a little time in the spring of life; but when our winter approaches, is glad to leave the joyless desert, and
wan-

wander forth in search of other springs
and a warmer climate.

SERM.
III.



Have we not seen whole families one day smiling in the bosom of plenty and prosperity, sunk down and oppressed the next by some unexpected stroke, and weeping in bitterness and anguish? Wealth in a moment changed to penury, health to sickness, and life to death?

Therefore, bear now this, as the prophet saith, thou that dwellest carelessly, thou that art given to pleasure, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; but these two things shall come unto thee in a moment. In one day the loss of children and widowhood, they shall come upon thee.

Are

SERM.

III.

Are we doomed to toil through the wearisome pilgrimage of this life, without the least remission from our cares, or the least refreshment on our journey! without one medicine to soften the disease, or one cordial to sweeten the draught? Hath the hand of nature diffused her sweets on every side, and shall not man be suffered to gather them? Hath the God of nature formed us with appetites that are never to be indulged, and passions which are never to be gratified? Is there, in short, no pleasure without vanity, no enjoyment without vexation?

This doubtless is an abstinence which the beneficent Author of our being doth not require; this is a sacrifice, which a God of mercy cannot be well pleased with: doubtless there are pleasures, even in this life, which we *may* enjoy without trans-

transgressing his laws, or incurring his
divine wrath.

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III.

Many and delightful are those pleasures which have the sanction of reason to authorize, and the seal of innocence to protect them; many are those which flow from the endearing ties and social connections of human life. Nature, ever liberal and bounteous to those who walk within her bounds, pours forth her flowers with a lavish hand; they spring up on every side of us, adorn and beautify every short season of our existence, and if properly cultivated and improved, may be gathered even in the winter of our days.

There is always left for us the exalted pleasure of acting up to the dignity of our nature, and the happiness which ariseth from the uniform and steady practice

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III.

tice of religion and virtue: pleasures which can never be called vanity, and joys which are never attended by vexation; pleasures which are not palled by satiety, and happiness that is not subject to decay.

Mirth indeed may boast her charms, and Luxury may glory in her allurements; but there is no mirth like the cheerful serenity of innocence, no luxury equal to the luxury of the benevolent heart, which overflows with generous sympathy, and pours itself forth in acts of mercy and beneficence. Virtue has a thousand charms which the sensualist hath never experienced, and a thousand beauties which he hath never contemplated; why then will the thoughtless libertine pursue the beaten road of folly and intemperance? why will he disgust himself with the repetition of the same tasteless pleasures,

asures, whilst there are joys which he hath never felt to allure, whilst there are sensations which he has never known to invite him; even such as his eye hath not seen, nor his ear heard; neither hath it entered into his heart to conceive them?

Lastly, my brethren, there is always left for us the supreme pleasure of doing good, of lessening the calamities and removing the wants of our fellow-creatures.

To conclude:—Satisfied as we must be, that all human pleasures are ever vain, fruitless, and unworthy, that they are nothing, in short, but vanity and vexation, let us quit them for something more durable and permanent.

God, of his infinite wisdom and goodness, hath purposely made all the enjoyments

SERM.
III.

ments of this life, insufficient, dangerous, fleeting and transitory, that man, finding by fatal experience that they *are* all unsatisfactory, might fix his heart where only true joys are to be found, even on that God who is the source of true happiness, and the inexhaustible fountain of pleasure; that by a steady perseverance in the paths of religion and virtue, he might render himself worthy to obtain that reward which is reserved for him in those eternal mansions, where uninterrupted bliss is dispensed by him, and pleasures flow *at his right hand for evermore.*

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S E R M O N I V .

P S A L M XVIII. 25. 26.

*With the holy thou shalt be holy, and with
a perfect man thou shalt be perfect. With
the clean thou shalt be clean, and with
the froward thou shalt learn frowardness.*

C O N V E R S A T I O N hath ever justly been SERM.
IV.
accounted a powerful instrument
of good or evil; hath always had the
strongest influence on the conduct of
human life, and the vice or virtue of
the world hath ever, in a great mea-
sure, been owing to it. The regula-
tion, therefore, of this important point,
did in all ages demand the utmost pru-
dence, and in none more perhaps than
in our own. Now, if ever, it is, no
doubt, highly expedient for us to exhort

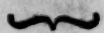
SERM.
IV.
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all that have any concern for their own souls, to shun the way of the sinner, and refrain their feet from the path of the wicked; to exhort all that fear the Lord to unite and combine themselves, to defend his honour, check the progress of vice, and promote godliness in this impious generation; in an age when we have degenerated so far from the modesty, purity, and dignity of christian conversation, that the least air of seriousness or gravity begins to look singular and unfashionable, so that whilst the wicked publish their sin as Sodom, and hide it not, religion seems as it were to distrust its own cause, to be ashamed of its own tenets, and to shun the proofs of its own divinity.

With the clean, says the Psalmist, thou shalt be clean, and with the froward, thou shalt learn frowardness;—that is, men are
gene-

generally such as their acquaintance and familiars are. As man was originally formed for society, there is implanted in our natures, a kind of sympathetic quality, a mutual attractive power, which insensibly draws us into an imitation of, and correspondency with, those persons and manners, which we are most intimately connected with. Even men of tempers and dispositions the most opposite and contradictory, will, by constant and habitual union, assimilate with, and resemble each other, like those liquors, which, though of contrary qualities, may so blend and incorporate, as never, or at least without the utmost difficulty, to be disunited; whence it must inevitably happen, that we form our ideas of men, and judge of their characters, their principles, and conduct, from the manners of those with whom they most frequently associate,

SERM.
IV.



SERM.
IV.


and the judgment founded on this criterion, is for the most part just and warrantable: some degree of conformity, with regard to sentiments and inclinations, is indeed so necessary towards the happiness of society, that without it, no familiarity can be entered into, no friendship contracted, no confidence established.

But, that this truth, which is of the highest consequence, may be the more deeply imprinted on us, I shall proceed to consider the influence which society must have upon us, either in making us wise and good, or foolish, licentious, and abandoned, which will divide itself into that, which ariseth first from conversation, and secondly, from example.

And first then, what light, what strength, and what pleasure, might conversation

versation administer to a mind fitly disposed for the reception of it! How might it awaken the conscience, and purify the heart!

SERM.
IV.

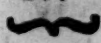
From the extraordinary change of manners which has taken place amongst us of late years, I know of scarce any thing which has suffered so much as conversation; that refinement and good breeding which we are grown so fond of, and which is so universally established, has shut up all the avenues of knowledge and wisdom, and placed the unlearned and illiterate, the wise and the foolish, the good and the bad, upon a level. In this age the learned man never attempts to instruct the ignorant, lest he should be deemed pedantic; the wise man never reproves the foolish one, lest he should be called ill bred; and the good and religious man never rebukes

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IV.

the profligate and abandoned, lest he should be stigmatized as an hypocrite or enthusiast: we hear nothing even when in company with men of the best sense and understanding, but the common hackneyed topics of converse, the news or trifles of the day, which afford neither pleasure nor profit; and yet, if a decent freedom, and a more ingenuous intercourse could, in spite of fashion and folly, be once more established amongst men, what infinite advantages would flow from it in support of religion and virtue! *The lips of the wise*, as Solomon observes, *disperse knowledge*: they minister grace to the hearers, edify and build us up in our holy faith: when God and our great Mediator, when the most important truths of the gospel dispensation, are the subject of our discourse; when language flows from the heart, when it has all the advantages which

which true friendship and known integrity can bestow upon it; such discourse cannot fail in the most sensible manner to effect our minds, and to influence our conduct.

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IV.



But the principal advantage resulting from good company, by which I mean not what is generally so called, but the honest, the virtuous, and the sober, is, secondly, that power which it imparts by the force of example.

Virtue never appears so beautiful and lovely as in action, and most indisputable it is, that it is represented with much more life in the practice of a wise and good man, than it can be in rules and precepts. The notions we form of duty from the lives of others, are generally more just and correct, than those which we form even from the scriptures them-

SERM.
IV.
{

themselves, because we are apt to bend and form the written rule a little, and sometimes very much in favour of ourselves, but we never do so in favour of others; the excellencies and perfections of a friend are the strongest incitements to emulation, and the most sensible proofs of our own remissness; whatever beauty and loveliness there can be in virtue, receives a new accession from his example; as the esteem and affection we have for him begets in us a value for every thing which he approves, and an aversion to every thing which he condemns. Add to this, that while we behold our friends discharging the parts of good Christians, we see in them not only what we ought to do, but what we *may* do; whatever is possible to them, is possible to us also; they are subject to the same frailties and passions, exposed to the same temptations, and have the same assistances as ourselves.

Men

Men for the most part considering themselves as individuals, are too apt to imagine that their private manners and character are of little consequence to society; the contrary of which is, to the last degree, self evident. It is not easy indeed to conceive of what infinite benefit and advantage to the community are the good morals and conversation of one truly pious and conscientious Christian; the worse and more licentious the age is in which he lives, the more useful may be his example, and his influence the more extensive; if he is cautious in his words, chaste and pure in his discourse, and ordereth his conversation aright, he may correct the profligate, reform the wicked, and convert the infidel.

But let us turn to the other side of this instructive lesson, and mark how
dreadful

•SERM.
IV.

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dreadful are the effects of *bad* example. Human nature is so prone to evil, that it needs very little temptation or encouragement to it; evil principles and practices are soon propagated, and if they find any countenance and approbation from those whom we converse with, will easily bear down all the opposition which education, reason, or even the principles of religion itself, can raise against them. *Can a man, says Solomon, take fire in his bosom and not be burnt?* Sin is the cement of friendship between finners; what but polluted waters therefore can flow from a polluted fountain? How hard is it, even for a good man to preserve the purity and sobriety of his mind amidst riots, drunkenness, and intemperance! and if a virtuous man can hardly stand on such slippery ground, how easily are those thrown down who are of themselves too prone

prone to evil, and too fond of temptation!

SERM.  
IV.



Since then the friends whom we associate with, and the company we keep, are of the utmost consequence and importance to us, let us see whether some useful rules may not be laid down on this head, which may be of service to us with regard to our future conduct.

*Enter not, says the wiseman, into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it, but, turn from it, and pass away:—withdraw yourselves, says the Apostle, from every brother that walks disorderly; if any brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one do not eat.*

But

SERM.  
IV.  
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But here it may perhaps be objected, that in this case we may soon find ourselves obliged to renounce the world, and bid adieu to society; our situation will resemble that which St. Paul mentions: *I wrote unto you, says he, in an epistle, not to keep company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world.* But even if we should grant that we must keep ill company or none, doubtless it is far better to abstain from all society, than to be corrupted with all the vices of it. Retirement is not, ought not ever to appear dreadful to a Christian; he need not complain of solitude, who can converse with his Maker and his Redeemer; a good man may meet God, like Isaac, in the fields, or like Moses in the desert: he may enjoy communion with him, like David  
in



in his bedchamber, or Joseph in the  
dungeon. No solitude can be so dismal  
or so horrid as that society which infects  
the heart, or darkens the understanding.  
No provocation or insolence can be half  
so injurious as that conversation which  
promotes vice and debauchery, and be-  
trays us into a love of this world, and a  
forgetfulness of God. There is, it must  
be acknowledged, in men of wit, parts,  
and genius, whose conversation is so  
much sought after, a tendency towards  
profaneness and debauchery; they are  
too apt to give a loose to their imagina-  
tions, to let go the reins of judgment,  
and sport in the regions of fancy, riot,  
and licentiousness. Such companions the  
sober and serious Christian cannot too care-  
fully avoid; the path indeed is strewn  
with flowers to all, but the snakes of  
vice and folly lurk beneath them, and  
will

SERM.  
IV.



SERM.  
IV.

will render our way full of danger, and pregnant with calamity.

If the true Christian appears in every thing we do or say, if the beauty of holiness shines forth in our converse, we shall soon see that the good will seek and love us; if we estrange ourselves from the modes and habits of a vicious world, their vanities and impertinencies will insensibly vanish from us, and only real worth and goodness will adhere to us.

But if, after all, the business and affairs of this world irresistibly draw us into the company and conversation of the wicked; all that we can do, and all that will be required of us, is not to have any fellowship or communion with them in their vices, but as far as we can to discountenance and reprove them. We should

should carefully consider what ought to be the true end and design of society amongst Christians. Surely not merely to eat and drink together, to laugh and trifle away our precious moments. The Scripture points out to us much nobler purposes and designs of conversation, which tells us, that our speech should be such as may administer grace to the hearers; that we should build up one another in holy faith; comfort and exhort one another continually; and surely it would be more delightful, as well as more beneficial to us, if, instead of censures and reflections, news and impertinence, folly and vanity, our conversation should now and then take a more serious turn, and be employed on some nobler subject, more becoming the genius and hope of a Christian; if we took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.

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IV.

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I would not by this be understood to mean that all the common accidents and affairs of life, or matters even of amusing and divertive nature, should be totally excluded from our discourse, but that morality and religion should be the general and chief tendency of it, and should always so far preserve their influence over it, as to prevent the intrusion of every thing that is profane, licentious, and immoral.

It is hard to conceive how a good Christian should want either matter or opportunity for pious discourse; he must suffer the course of God's Providence to pass without observation or remark; he must be a stranger to the works of nature, and utterly unread in the history of human affairs; he must be unacquainted with the Book of God; he must have reflected very little on the temptations



tions of the world, and the defects and infirmities of his own nature, who could want matter for good discourse. The man of letters, the man of business, the man of pleasure, never wants matter; it is strange that the Christian alone should be thus barren, he who should abound in wisdom and understanding, who has every hour matters of the highest importance on his hands, and who may be entertained with more and richer pleasures than the most fortunate Epicurean could ever boast; and still less, one would imagine, could he reasonably complain of the want of opportunity, which every day and every hour would constantly afford him. But alas! we are apt rather to shun than to seek occasions; all serious and religious matters have long since been banished out of fashionable company and discourse, con-



SERM.  
IV.

finer within the narrow and dirty channel of trifling and impertinence.

But is not this, my brethren, a very near approach to being ashamed of Christianity? and if it be, how shall we escape that dreadful sentence which is pronounced against us in holy writ? *Who-so-ever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father.*

In the primitive times of the Gospel religious conversation had the most surprising efficacy on the minds of men: next to the assistance of the Spirit of God, the Christians, in those ages, found no greater support under all their trials than what they derived from their mutual

Mutual encouragements and exhortations of one another. Doubtless this is a species of public devotion which God would gladly accept from us, and which would be as well pleasing to him as that which we offer up to him in the closet or the temple. How can we more fully convince the world of the excellency of religion; how can we more effectually promote the love of it in others, than by shewing them, that it has taken possession of our thoughts, words, and actions; that it has purified our conduct, and refined our conversation? whereas on the other hand, if religion hath no part in our discourse, we shall soon learn to think and act with the same liberty we talk; that which never enters into our mouths will scarce ever sink deep into our hearts; and if we always converse with men that never think of God,

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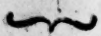
it is most probable that we shall live like them also.

To conclude — As our reputation, health, and happiness in this world, and what is infinitely more valuable, our eternal salvation in that which is to come, depends so much on the choice of those whom we associate with, permit me most earnestly to recommend to you the strictest care and caution in this important particular: above all it will be incumbent on us to be upon our guard in our earlier intimacies and connections, because the habits and friendships of our youth will always maintain their influence over our riper age; and if we suffer the spring of life to be corrupted by loose and vicious company, we shall scarce ever be fond of sober and virtuous society in the autumn and winter of our days:



days : if therefore any of us are already linked with the vicious and profane ; if we have already learned uncleanness from the unclean, and frowardness from the froward, let us immediately dissolve the guilty bond, and free ourselves at once from the shackles of folly and intemperance ; let us no longer hold fellowship with the deceitful ; let us not know a wicked person ; no worldly advantage whatsoever can make us amends for incurring the wrath of God ; no temporal pleasure, if any such we find in it, can compensate for the loss of eternal happiness. Lastly, let us call to mind that, as the prophet Malachi says, *The book of remembrance is written ;* that a time will come when we shall be called to account for every idle word, when it will be demanded of us, what friendships we have cultivated, what conversation we have been engaged in, whe-



SERM.  
IV.  


ther we have been clean with the clean, or with the froward have learned frowardness: little will it then avail to produce the rich as our associates, the great and mighty of the world as our friends and companions; at that tribunal their affluence will no more palliate our vices, than they can excuse their own; little regard will be paid to their influence, and little respect to their authority; by our own words and by our own actions we must then stand or fall; as our converse has been in this world, so will it be also in the next; if we have long associated with the froward and unclean, to the society of such, and such alone, we shall be assigned, to lament with them our folly, and to be punished with them for our guilt: whilst on the other hand, if we have always attached ourselves to the good, the virtuous, and the religious, there

we

we shall reap the blessed fruits of it, and be rewarded by our admission to the spirits of good men made perfect, refined from the dross of sensual objects, from all frowardness and uncleanness, from every taint of human error and corruption, where we shall be pure even as they are pure, and holy as they are holy.

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IV.

To this blessed converse and exalted society may we all be one day admitted, through the merits and mediation of our great Saviour and Redeemer; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and power, both now and ever.

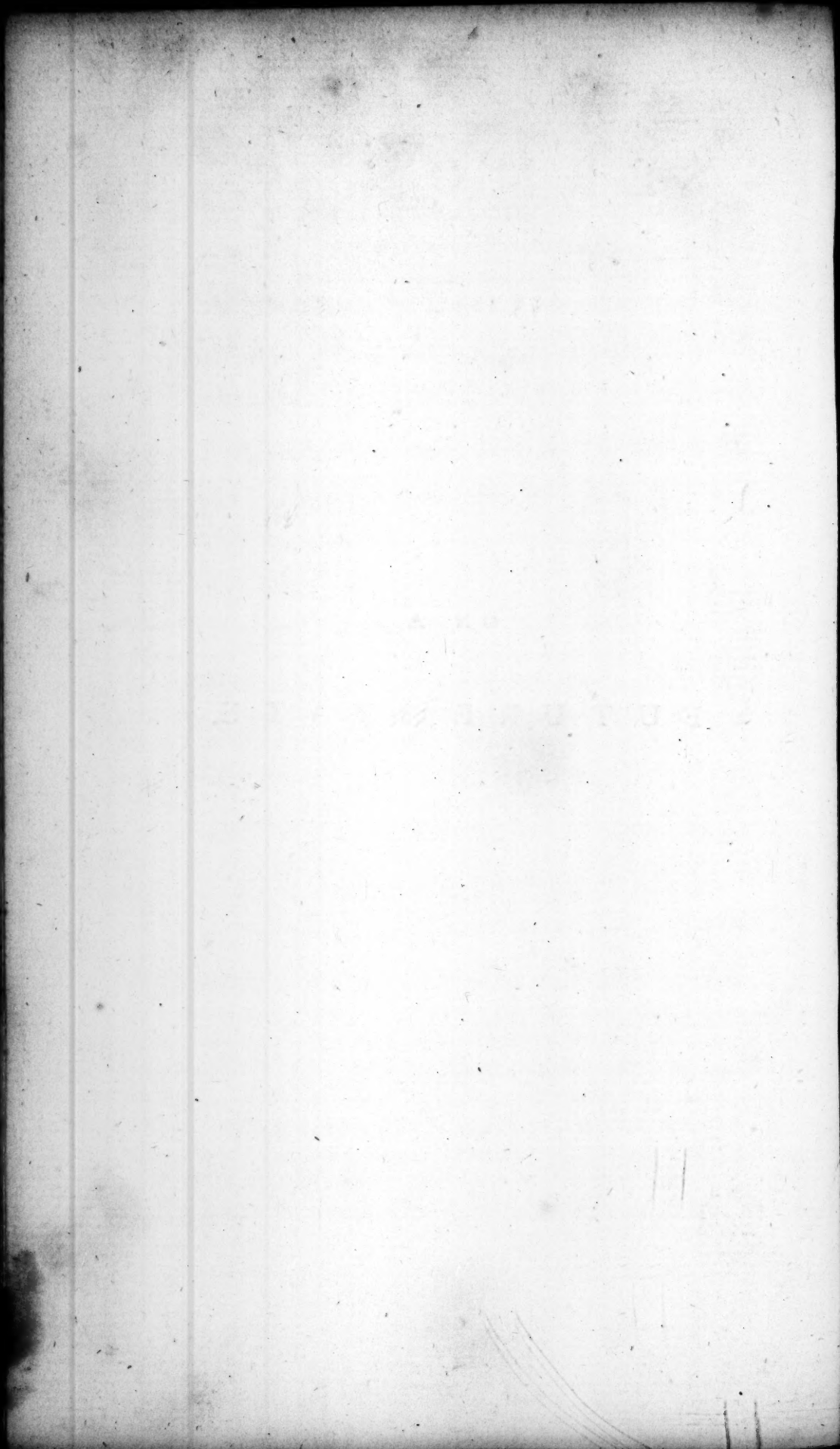


HERMANN

ON A

FUTURE STATE.





# S E R M O N V.

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I CORINTHIANS, XV. 19.

*If in this life only we have hope in Christ,  
we are of all men most miserable.*

**T**H E R E is nothing which the soul  
of man doth reflect on with greater  
pleasure, or contemplate with more  
real satisfaction, than the dignity of its  
own nature, and the delightful, though  
distant prospect of its own immortality.

SERM.  
V.

To have our self-love gratified in so  
high a degree by the continuation of our  
being, and our ambition by the exalta-  
tion of it, cannot but be the most natu-  
ral object of our wishes, the great and  
ultimate end of all our hopes and desires;  
to cherish and encourage these hopes, and  
to

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V.  
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to animate us in the cause of truth and virtue, a secret consciousness is implanted in the breast of every man, which never fails in his calmer moments to suggest to him, that though the gross and earthly part of him, his corporeal frame, may be liable to change, decay, and dissolution; there is still within him a more refined portion, which seems, by its superior qualities, capable of much greater perfection, points out its divine original, and aspires to immortality.

The partial and unequal distribution of things in this state, the uncertainty and imperfection of all human blessings, the distresses and calamities, the vanity and shortness of life, are among the most powerful arguments which have been made use of ever since the beginning of this world to support the belief of another.

But

But the conviction of this solemn and important truth, was too great a conquest for mere unassisted, unenlightened reason to attain unto: the heathen world therefore could form but poor and imperfect notions of it: they had indeed the strong and repeated suggestions of their own minds in its favour, but who could inform them whether those suggestions were not merely the delusive flatteries of self-love?

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V.

The councils and determination of the Divine Being, in regard to a future state, could be known by none but himself, and of consequence by him, and him alone, must be declared; and to this end, in the fulness of time, God of his mercy thought fit to disclose this great secret to mankind by the mouth of his beloved Son, who descended from the bosom of his



SERM.  
V.  
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his father, to bring life and immortality to light by the gospel.

But at the same time, that the beneficent Saviour of mankind conferred this illustrious privilege on his faithful servants and followers, he required of *them* in return for so inestimable a benefit, and so comfortable an assurance, an implicit obedience to his will, and a strict conformity to his divine commandments: As the religion of Christ therefore brings with it a nobler prospect and promise of reward, it hath doubtless a superior claim to our submission, and a higher title to our esteem.

If we look back upon the state of christianity on the first promulgation of it, we shall very readily acknowledge that in regard to the things of this world, it was by no means a state to be envied

or

of desired; that it was, on the other hand, a state of misery, of pain and persecution; a continued scene of uninterrupted sorrow and distress; the unequal combat of humility against pride, poverty against riches, weakness against power: to root up the strong prejudices of education, to pull down and destroy the great edifice of paganism, whose foundations were so deeply laid, and build a structure on its ruins so different in every part, was a task which required, and which therefore was endowed with more than human assistance in the execution of it. Though our blessed Saviour came as a common friend to mankind, yet was he rather received as a common enemy. To the Jews, christianity was a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles it was foolishness; the arm of the magistrate was lifted up, and the voice of people raised against it: oppressed therefore as it was

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V.

on every side, by all the calamities which this world could inflict; nothing but the sure and certain hope of another, could possibly have supported them under it. With great reason therefore ought the apostle to say, in the words of the text, *That if in this life only they had hope, they were of all men most miserable.*

I have often thought that the words of my text carried with them a proof of a future state, which hath not been sufficiently insisted on, or illustrated by the preachers of christianity: for surely if the gospel's dispensation requires more self-denial, more abstinence from worldly pleasures, a greater degree of patience, long suffering, and forgiveness; if it demands a more constant exertion of active virtue, and a more strenuous opposition to every evil, it must naturally, pursuant to our idea of the divine justice, intitle



us to a greater and more durable reward ; SERM.  
V.  
all that it takes from us in this life, it will repay us in the next, and what it denieth us here, will make ample recompense for hereafter.

Whoever takes a fair and impartial view of the Christian system, cannot fail to observe, that though the ground-work is the same as that of natural religion, the colours laid on it are infinitely more glowing and beautiful, its circle of duties more extensive, its doctrines more refined, and its morality of a more exalted nature.

The duties of self-denial, of humility and long suffering have been inculcated by the wise and good in all ages of the world ; but if we would see them heightened, improved, and enforced in the strongest manner, we must have recourse to christianity.



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V.

Mutual charity and forgiveness was a virtue, which the ancient philosophers and lawgivers endeavoured to instil into the breasts of men; but to take in the whole range of nature, to extend the arms of mercy and compassion, even to those who had injured and oppressed us; to embrace all with one universal and godlike magnanimity, was a sentiment reserved to throw a peculiar lustre on that religion which alone could inspire it: it must be acknowledged that we are not, as the first Christians were, persecuted and oppressed by the civil power; but it is equally certain that we are persecuted and oppressed.

It is indeed the natural consequence of the precepts which we are sworn to obey, and the religion we profess. *Who-soever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, says our Saviour, turn unto him the left also.*

Ye

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemies; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

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V.

To forgive, therefore, to suffer, to abstain, to be just even as God is just, and to be pure even as he is pure; to be uniform in our conduct, not to offend even in one point, lest we be deemed guilty of all; to be continually subject to the ridicule of the scoffer, the malice of the reviler, and all the thousand indignities to which he, if such a one there be, who conforms exactly to the commandments of the gospel, is exposed; this may well (as in holy-writ it often is) be called a state of warfare; a very dangerous combat indeed it is, the combat which calls for all our resolution to contend with, insomuch

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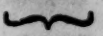
that added to the natural calamities and distresses of human life, it will sufficiently induce us to cry out with the apostle, *That if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.*

From a previous consideration of that which is expressed in the text, we are naturally led to that which is visibly implied in it, namely, that the hope of Christians is not in this life, but in another,

*If after the manner of men, says St. Paul, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* Doubtless, as the apostle very plainly intimates, if there were no morrow after death, the Epicures were a profitable and prudent resolution: if this life were our journey's end, who could blame us for fitting



sitting down and enjoying it? if this world is indeed our home, it becomes us to beautify and adorn it, to render it, by every method in our power, without regard to strict virtue, more comfortable and delightful to us. There are species of guilt which no human laws can reach; and there are actions to be performed which no eye, but the eye of God, can discover: from such guilt, and from such actions, what shall deter us but an hereafter? And if we have no *hope* of another we can have no *fear* of it.

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V.  


But the justice of the Almighty hath not so ordained it; God, we may rest assured, will not leave the wicked unpunished, nor the virtuous unrewarded.

The good and pious Christian, so far from being the most miserable, is the most happy of men. I am willing to



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V.

believe, says the Philosopher, that I have within me an immaterial and immortal soul. I am willing to imagine that in another state I shall again see my departed friends, who have trod with me in the paths of honour and virtue; it may be an error which I embrace, but if it be, it is an error which I would not wish to be convinced of.

Thus spake the good but doubting heathen, whilst the happier Christian with rapture, and with confidence crieth out, *I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

The hope of the heathen was like the deities he worshipped, powerless, inconstant, variable, and imaginary; not to be trusted, relied, or depended on; but the hope of the Christian is like the God  
he

he serves, strong, fixed, and immutable, steady in his promises, and able to perform them, subject to no change, imperfection, or decay; but like the great giver of all good, constant and powerful, and with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

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V.

*I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord, and who so believeth in me, shall never die.* If then, we are more happy than the rest of mankind, let us be more grateful also; by being thoroughly sensible of our superior privileges, let us shew that we deserve them; nothing can be more absurd than to acknowledge our firm belief of another life, and yet to act as if we had no hope but in this.

If then these things are so, what manner of men ought we to be in all conversation and godliness? Surely the hopes  
of

SERM.  
V.  


of another, and much better world, should teach us to set a true value on every thing in this. Let us consider how mean, trifling, and insignificant the little low concerns of this life are, when thrown into the balance with the great affairs of eternity; the small and smooth current which glides by us, the gentle motions of its waters, and the beauty of its banks, may afford us a calm and tranquil delight; but when we sit on the sea shore, and behold the vast and boundless ocean before us; when we contemplate the wonders of the great deep, does it not fill our souls with a nobler pleasure, and far more exalted ideas? Do we not then look back with contempt on the inconsiderable stream, and are even surprised that the sight of it could give us any pleasure or satisfaction? Just in the same manner the pious believer when he is departing from this narrow scene of things,



things, looks back upon it with an eye  
of contempt.

SERM.  
V.

He wishes with the holy apostle to be dissolved and to be with God, to taste of those pleasures which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, and which God hath prepared for the righteous.

It is a very false notion, to suppose those who are miserable in this life are desirous of another; or that only those who have no hope here, entertain any of hereafter; for surely the happiest may expect to be much happier, the wisest to be more wise, than in this state they can possibly be: they may expect gratifications much more suitable to their nature, and far more excellent both in value and in duration.

Let



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V.

Let us not then, when the glorious prospect is opening before us, wilfully shut our eyes against it, confining all our views within the narrow circle that surround us, till by degrees we become like wretches shipwrecked on a little bank of sand, the sea continues gaining ground upon, and threatening to overwhelm us.

To conclude—If we have hope in Christ, let us act as if we had it; let not the variety of worldly objects so distract our sight, as utterly to turn our eyes away from their noblest and most worthy object; let us weigh and consider the value of that treasure which God hath reserved; thank him for that victory over death which he through Christ hath obtained for us. After such strong and repeated assurances of eternal life given us by the great author and finisher  
of

of our faith; what can we plead in SERM.  
V. excuse for refusing our assent to a truth  so glaring and self evident?

After all, most plain and indisputable it is, that if we are not of all men the most happy, there can be but one reason why we are not so, and that is because our sins will not permit us. But let us, I beseech you, remember that if we have no hope of another life, we must have the fear of it. How miserable and how dreadful must our situation be, when that prospect of a future state which was graciously designed to be our chief comfort and support, shall become our most alarming terror and our bitterest affliction! What will our situation be, when at the last and great day, he before whose judgment seat we are to appear, even the blessed Jesus shall lay aside the meekness of a tender Redeemer,

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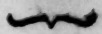
V.



Redeemer, and assume all the dreadful majesty of an offended Judge! when he shall say to the trembling unbelievers,

“ Was it for this, ye ungrateful and ungenerous children of disobedience, that I came unto you? Did my Gospel bring immortality to light, that you should walk still in darkness? O ye of little faith! I came unto you and ye regarded me not; I promised and ye distrusted; I threatened and ye defied me: but since neither reason could persuade you to hope, nor revelation assure you of your everlasting existence, instead of rejoicing in it as your reward, accept it now as your punishment. Go ye accursed of my Father into eternal misery, unto that place where the fire is not quenched, and the worm never dieth.”

But let us turn our eyes from this sad  
and

and melancholy prospect, and consider SERM:  
V.  
how different his reception will be of   
the good and pious Christian; let us  
place him before our eyes, thus gra-  
ciously condescending, in the great and  
last day, to welcome his faithful fol-  
lowers to the regions of bliss and immor-  
tality: "Come," will he say unto them,  
"ye blessed of my Father and receive  
your reward; I promised and ye believed;  
I spake and ye attended; I commanded and  
ye obeyed; like me ye have suffered the  
pains of mortality, and like me ye have  
tasted the bitterness of death; ye shall  
be revived with the cordial of life; ye  
did not place your hopes on that vain and  
transitory world, but reserved them for,  
and they shall be fulfilled in, a better  
and more durable one.

"Ye have been persecuted, oppressed,  
wearied



SERM.  
V.

wearied and fatiated on earth, and now  
ye shall be welcomed, refreshed, delight-  
ed, and rewarded in Heaven."

ON THE  
UNCERTAINTY  
OF  
HUMAN HAPPINESS.

VOL. III.

I



# S E R M O N VI.

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## PROVERBS XXVII. I.

*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

A MONGST all the various species of pride which corrupt the heart of man, and which are all of them, as is declared in holy writ, abominable unto God; there is not perhaps one more absurd and ridiculous, or attended with more fatal consequences than that which the wise man hath pointed out to us in the words of the text. *Boast not, says he, of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

SERM.  
VI.

The folly of this particular kind of pride doth not, we see, consist merely in

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SERM.  
VI.

the excessive and partial good opinion of that which we possess; but extends itself to an ill-grounded confidence in, and dependance on that which may be reserved for us; and carries with it both an insolent security in our own state and condition, and withal a pretence to that knowledge of future events, which is by no means the portion of mortality. It is as it were incroaching on the prerogative of God, and assuming to ourselves that peculiar privilege which is reserved for the Most High.

It is indisputable, that pride was not made for man. If we have no reason (and we most certainly have none) to be proud of what we have, much less can we pretend to it on account of that which we have not.

One would indeed naturally imagine,  
that

that the instability of all human blessings, the serious contemplation on the shortness and vanity of this life, the various vicissitudes of fortune, the uncertainty of every thing which we behold, or are conversant with, might be sufficient preservatives against an infatuation so strange, a conduct so unaccountable.

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VI.

Were a being of superior rank and order to our own, and at the same time unacquainted with our state and conditions, to come down amongst us, what strange and erroneous notions would he form concerning man, from the first view of our conduct and behaviour!

Were he to observe the assuming haughtiness of power, the pride of health and beauty, the insolence of riches and prosperity; were he to see the kings and mighty ones of the earth laying plans of

SERM.  
VI.

universal empire; the statesman inventing methods to enslave those who are yet unborn; the great and wealthy building sumptuous palaces that may last for ages; the wise and learned grasping at universal knowledge, and diving into the depths of futurity! Would he not imagine, that man was not, as the Psalmist says, little lower, but infinitely superior to the angels in his powers and faculties; that we were made to live and reign here for ever, and that (as it is said of our Creator) a thousand years were nothing in our sight; that our bodies were firm, solid, and indissoluble, and our souls never subject to change, or frailty! Would he not think that wherever riches had chosen their habitation, they could never depart from it, and where the sun of prosperity once shone, the clouds of sorrow and adversity could never overshadow it; that the roses of youth could never be plucked



plucked by time, nor the bloom of health impaired by sickness and decay?

SERM.

VI

How great then after all would be his surprise and astonishment, to find upon a closer inspection, that man, proud and self-sufficient as he is, was but a short-lived, poor, miserable, dependant being; that he fadeth away suddenly like the grass, which in the morning is green, and groweth up, and in the evening is cut down, dried up and withered; that so far from being able to look into futurity, he was ignorant even of the things which were before him; that every attainable human good was fleeting and transitory; and every evil almost certain and unavoidable; that all the riches he could amass, might be snatched from him in a moment, and all the knowledge he was so proud of erased and obliterated, and leave not a trace upon his mind; that in short, whilst he is boasting of to-



SERM.  
VI.  
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morrow, he is not master of to day, nor even of an hour of it; and that in the midst of all his views, and all his pretensions, he may be called away, his breath go forth, he return to his earth, and all his thoughts perish! On such an occasion, what would be the thoughts of such a being? With what an eye of scorn and contempt would he look down upon us!

*Thou knowest not*, says the wise man, *what a day may bring forth*. When we cast our eyes on so apparently inconsiderable a portion of time, we are apt to imagine it incapable of containing any thing great or important; and yet what a variety of good and evil may be crowded into this narrow circle! It hath not only determined the fate of individuals, but even of the largest bodies and societies of men; armies have been conquered,  
king-

kingdoms ruined, and empires destroyed in it. And if we bring our reflections home to ourselves, if we consider how very much a few fleeting hours may affect our private concerns, we shall be still better enabled to judge what a day may bring forth. Have we not seen families one day smiling in the bosom of plenty and prosperity; the next, crushed down by some unexpected stroke, and weeping in anguish, and bitterness of heart? Have we not seen, even in less time than this, wealth changed to penury, health to sickness, and life to death?

Joy and sorrow, good and evil succeed each other, like light and darkness over the face of the whole earth.

*Therefore hear now this, as the Prophet says, thou that dwellest carelessly; thou that*  
*art*

SERM.  
VI.

*art given to pleasures, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me—I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come upon thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood.*

As man is himself a frail and imperfect being, it cannot fail but that every thing which he produceth must partake of his imperfection, and that the stamp of his own mortality should be imprinted on all his works. The best operations of his weak hands moulder into ruin, the noblest productions of his mind perish and are no more. Yet, though the labours of human art are but the constant though silent reproaches of human folly, we hardly make any thing which does not last longer than ourselves; the building we know will often remain, when he who raised, is buried under it; and the

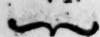


the garden shall preserve its beauty and verdure, when the hand that planted it is withered and decayed. Look at that builder (says a sensible writer) who in the vale of years is carrying on the work of youth, pressing the labourer to finish that edifice which he shall never live in, furnishing those apartments which he shall never inhabit! Turn thy eyes to another who is so proud of becoming a father, who hath already pointed out the magistracy which his son shall obtain, the seat of honour he shall possess! If he knew that his beloved child should die almost as soon as he was born, would he be so transported at his birth?

*Man (says the Psalmist) walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall enjoy them.*

God



SERM.  
VI.

God hath graciously ordained that the miseries and disappointments we meet with here, should prepare our minds for hereafter. Pain, want, and adversity, are inflicted on us, that we may sit more loose to the things of this transitory state. Towards the close of our short day, instead of being flattered with delusive hopes of to-morrow's happiness, our evening is clouded over with sorrow and disquietude; the loss of some whom we loved and esteemed, the unkindness and ingratitude of others, and the insincerity and treachery of many more, make us out of love with every thing about us, and reconcile us to our necessary and unavoidable change: and how early (even in youth) that change may come, there is none can say! How ridiculous is it then to depend on that which we may never see! Have we, who boast of to-morrow, one hour at  
our

our own command? To-morrow may  
indeed arrive, but who shall tell us,  
whether we shall live to meet it? Or if  
we do, whether it will come as a friend  
or an enemy, and whether the sun will  
shine, or the day be overcast?

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How often does it happen that where  
we promise ourselves the greatest share  
of happiness, we meet the least! where  
the imagination is exalted, and we flat-  
ter ourselves with visionary ideas of fu-  
ture joy and pleasure, the feast generally  
palls upon the appetite, and the higher  
we raised our hopes and expectations,  
the more exquisite is our pain at the dis-  
appointment of them. And the same  
degree of certainty which we have of  
to-morrow's pleasure, we have also of  
to-morrow's conduct. We make reso-  
lutions one day, which we want strength  
to perform the next. It is very easy to

talk

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talk of virtue and religion, to promise to be good, sober, charitable, and devout; but when we are called upon to put in practice these professions, there is generally some obstacle to divert us from it: and yet this imaginary point, to-morrow, is still fixed upon as the centre of our happiness, and virtue also.

Ask the miser, "who panteth after the dust of the earth," and drudges with unceasing toil and assiduity in the dirty, slavish road of interest, when he will sit down and enjoy the fruits of his labours? and he will answer you—*to-morrow*.

Ask the ambitious man, who is hunting after power and preferment, when his hopes will be satisfied, and his desires have an end? he will tell you he has but one step to the summit of his wishes,



wishes, that *to-morrow* will put a period to his views, and fix him in repose and felicity.

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Ask the idle and voluptuous, who is throwing away his irreparable hours in the unmeaning circle of fashionable delights, when he will think of his duty to his God and his fellow creatures, and become a useful member of society? he will declare he has just finished his course of pleasures, that he hath sufficiently experienced the vanity and vexation of them, and that *to-morrow* he intends to quit the paths of folly and impertinence, and strike directly into the road of virtue—And what is (for the most part) the consequence of all these solemn professions? *To-morrow* comes! this great reclainer of sinners, this universal reformer of mankind! and finds the miser at his treasures, the courtier at his levee,  
the



SERM. the man of pleasure at his diversions !

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~~~~~ All, in short, engaged in the very same pursuits, making the same promises, and protestations, and with just the same degree of truth and sincerity.

Since such then is the instability of human happiness, and such the uncertainty of human virtue, ought we ever to boast of, or depend upon either of them? Had not the wise man but too much reason to cry out, *Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth!* Let us not then flatter ourselves that we are to depend on to-morrow. Let him who is in the pride of health call to mind, that sickness may come to-morrow, and put an end to it. Let him that glorieth in his riches remember, that poverty, like an armed man, may come suddenly and seize on him. Let him that is wise
know,

know, that folly may in a moment overtake him. And let not him that is virtuous to-day, forget that vice may take possession of him before to-morrow; if he stand therefore, let him take heed lest he fall.

In the common affairs of life better advice cannot be given, than that what we can do *to-day*, we should never defer till *to-morrow*. In regard to our pursuits after the transitory goods of this life, it is certain that procrastination is the parent of disappointment; the fault punishes itself: and they who depend on futurity for their share of happiness, do very seldom obtain it; but when this absurd reliance on *to-morrow* is confirmed into habit, when it induces by degrees to neglect the great work of our salvation, the folly swells into a crime, and may become the dreadful means of in-

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volving us in everlasting destruction. The business of a sincere repentance, is a business which (if we hope for pardon) must at some time of life be performed by all; yet it is generally the very last we think of. Youth is too idle, and manhood too busy and ambitious, old age too feeble and decrepid, or too perverse and obstinate to engage in it. *To-morrow*, that universal sponsor, whose faith is plighted to pay every debt, is appointed to discharge this also: and this he most generally performs, like the other offices committed to his charge. As this debt increases, we for the most part grow more unwilling to pay it: as thought and reflection become more necessary, they become more distasteful also: and when the disease of sin is grown to such a malignancy, *to-morrow*, even if it comes, can bring no medicine to remove it. A death-bed repentance

is by no means to be relied on, and yet, in hopes of this *to-morrow*, we still go on, forgetful of the great design for which we were created.

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As the consideration of the words before us may serve to repress the pride of the insolent, so it may at the same time smooth the rugged brow of adversity, and turn aside the arrows of affliction. It may afford some consolation to the poor and destitute, to those who are oppressed by sorrow and misfortune, to reflect that such is the vicissitude of human affairs, so uncertain is the lot and portion of mortality, that we know not what a day may bring forth: a sudden and unexpected change may happen, that from a state of bitterness and misery, shall raise the drooping heart to joy and gladness. *When the poor and needy seek water and find none, and their*

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tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will bear them, the God of Israel will not forsake them. Let not then the poor be oppressed, and the wretched give themselves up as a prey to despair and melancholy, but let them rely on him who is both able and willing to relieve them: they know not what a day may bring forth; sorrow and disquietude may endure for a night, and joy and peace may yet salute their morning.

To conclude then——*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.* Our short day of life is all that is allotted us for work, the morrow brings the reward, whether it be for good or evil; *work therefore whilst it is day, before the night cometh wherein*

wherein no man can work. It will be too late for thee, O man! when thy feet are stumbling upon the high mountains, and the shadows of the evening have overtaken thee.

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Let the deceived procrastinator then remember, that his delays are dangerous and destructive; that what he fondly expects may never come; that he who hath promised pardon to our repentance, hath no where promised life till we repent; that the morrow therefore which he hath so little reason to hope, he may have but too much reason to fear: since, if it doth not bring forth our repentance, it must heighten our condemnation, which may God of his mercy avert, and give us grace to make the best use of *to-day*.

ON
PRIDE AND SELF-CONCEIT.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

S E R M O N VII.

PROVERBS XVI. 5.

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

FROM a serious and impartial view of the state of man here on earth, from a few reflections on his situation and end, his powers and faculties, from a consideration of him as a creature formed out of the dust, and speedily to return to it; attacked on every side by evil and corrupt affections; beset with dangers and calamities; at best but partially and imperfectly happy; one would not suppose that such a vice as pride could possibly subsist in the universe, and much less that it was full of very little

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little else; that it had spread itself over the whole face of nature, corrupted (in some degree) every heart, and become the plague of all mankind!

Since, however, we are but too well convinced, that pride is universal, let us endeavour to trace the secret springs of it; let us see what broad and extensive foundation there is for so large and magnificent a structure. The principal columns which support this mighty edifice will be found, on the closest examination, to arise from an opinion of exalted merit.

1st, From a superiority of affluence and power.

2dly, From superior parts, genius, wisdom, and knowledge.

3dly,

3dly, From a notion of superior virtue. SERM.
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If, from a candid examination into each of these pretensions, they should be found wanting in the balance, it might surely teach us to behave with meekness and humility, *and not* (as the Apostle says) *to be wise in our own conceits.*

And first then, amongst all those advantages which constitute a fancied pre-eminence amongst men, and tend to nourish and increase the pride of the human heart, riches and power have a claim to the highest and most exalted station: from the general conduct of the rich and great towards their inferiors, from the pride and insolence of their behaviour, one would imagine that they were a higher order of beings, adorned with nobler faculties and accomplishments,

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ments, possessed of many more virtues and perfections than those whom they trample on, and despise; that they were not liable to accidents, sickness, and misfortune, or, in short, subject to the common laws of mortality: we cannot easily bring ourselves to suppose, that such assumed superiority is owing merely to the caprice of a deluded multitude, or the smiles of fortune; that the possessors are indebted for it to the vigilance (at best) of lucky industry; or it may be to the undeserved success of active vice; and hence it arises that pride is fed and nourished by flatterers; the haughtiness and vain-glory of one half of mankind is supported by the ignorance, meanness, and servility of the other.

There is certainly no reason to be proud of that which neither bestows real
merit

merit nor implies any. If riches and power could bestow real happiness, if they were a mark of superior excellence, or a certain token of the divine favour; they would not be bestowed so frequently as they are, on the worst and most abandoned of mankind. Shall we then be proud of that which is given to those whom we despise and abhor? of that which is dangerous, fleeting, and transitory? of that which has no intrinsic value, or certainty of duration?

Pass we on then to the 2d part which I proposed to consider; namely, superior knowledge and wisdom: and with regard to this it may with great truth be observed, that there is no part of mankind more subject to pride and vanity, than those favourites on whom nature hath conferred these so much envied,

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vied, so much boasted privileges. It must indeed be acknowledged, that to be wiser than our fellow-creatures, to excel in that which so eminently distinguishes us from the inferior part of the creation, must be of all things the most desirable: but what degree of knowledge, after all, can man arrive at, that should make him proud? If we could look around us without prejudice and partiality, if we could dive a little deeper, than we generally do, into the hearts and minds of others, we should most certainly discover that our God is much more equitable in the dispensation of his gifts, than the pride and petulance of man will allow him to be; and that knowledge, as well as happiness, is more equally divided amongst us, than we were at first inclined to think it. It hath always been matter of reproach
against

against the learned, that they are vain, and self-sufficient, great admirers of themselves, and great contemners of others. The truth is, we are too apt to imagine, that because we are constantly pouring in, our vessel must be fuller than our neighbours; but do not at the same time reflect that we are pouring into a sieve, which lets as much through as it can possibly retain: our bodies, we know, undergo perpetual change, some particles every day go off by perspiration, and other fresh ones succeed; and so it is with our minds also, one branch of science is seldom learned but another is forgotten, and as much perhaps is lost as acquired. Were it possible for an inhabitant of the earth to place himself in the very centre of the universe, from whence he might behold all the planets moving round him, what improvements might

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}

might he make ! how well acquainted would he be with the whole glorious system ! As it is, his guesses must be very imperfect, and his knowledge very superficial ; and all for this plain reason, because he does not stand in the right place. And as it is with the natural, so it is also in regard to the moral and intellectual world ; we do not stand in the middle of things, our eye cannot take in the whole, but is confined to an inconsiderable part. The limits of human knowledge are much contracted, her zones quickly terminated, and all our wisdom is comprehended in a very narrow circle. The wisest will, upon serious and mature reflection, find themselves but a little less ignorant, and the most innocent discover themselves to be only a little less guilty than their fellow-creatures.

There

There is a knowledge indeed which makes many very wise in their own conceits, and which is very greedily sought after, though we have no reason to glory in it; and that is, the knowledge of the world; but of this, when we glory, we may be truly said to glory in our shame: for what is this knowledge? and wherein does it consist? To know the world, is only to have arrived at a greater proficiency than others in fraud and dissimulation, to be so well acquainted with the tempers and dispositions of men, as to make them subservient to our own interest and advantage; to know the deformities and imperfections of human nature, and thus to contract a disgust at, and abhorrence of it: to see the good success of those who thrive by treachery and vice, and from thence to form a desire of imitating them; it is but to know, in short, what

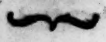
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a good man would wish to be ignorant of, and to see that, which a wise man would wish to shut his eyes against. After all, the only real and valuable knowledge which we acquire, is that which is gained by experience: but how dearly this is bought, we need not be reminded. Our fortune, our fame, our peace, and happiness, even our innocence and virtue are too often sacrificed in the pursuit: this is an acquisition, therefore, which, whilst it promotes our interest, reproaches severely our folly; and where we ought to blush at the expence of our purchase, we have surely very little reason to be proud of the bargain.

The last kind of self-conceit I purposed to consider, is that which springs from the notion of superior virtue. That so frail and sinful a creature, as
man,

man, should lay claim to any merit on this article; that such unprofitable servants as we are, should boast of our labour, is both impious and absurd, and must doubtless subject us to the displeasure of our great Lord and Master. Yet such is our pride and presumption, that every audacious hypocrite, who has but the *appearance*, demands that respect which is not due even to the *reality* of virtue. Every self-sufficient enthusiast who abstains from vices which have no temptations for him, or performs duties which give him no trouble to comply with, will boast his superior goodness and piety, and, like the proud Pharisee, thank God that he is not like other men.

To say the truth, the triumphs of human knowledge over human ignorance; of human virtue, over human frailty; are like many other triumphs,

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more easy to be gained than deserved. They are not so much owing to the bravery of the conqueror, as to the want of it in the vanquished. But whilst every thing about us seems to reproach our weakness, we are boasting of our strength : like those absurd Stoics, who pretended to smile in the midst of anguish, and even whilst they felt the inconveniencies of pain, had the folly to deny its existence.

It would become the man, who is proud of his knowledge, to reflect, that the wisest of men, after he had toiled through the whole round of science, and had seen all things under the sun, confessed his knowledge to be vanity, and felt it to be vexation also.

And no less would it become the man who is proud of his virtue, to call to
mind

mind what our blessed Redeemer said when he was saluted by the name of good, *Why call you me good?* said he, *there is none good but one.*

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Shall we, my brethren, be proud of knowledge, when he who had the best title to the name of wise, acknowledged himself ignorant? or shall we be proud of our virtue, when he who alone deserved the name of good, refused to be called so?

God graciously implanted in the mind of man, a capacity of knowledge to improve and adorn it; and sowed the seeds of virtue in his heart, that they might yield the future harvest of felicity. To be proud, therefore of knowledge, is to be blind with light; and to be proud of virtue, is to poison ourselves with the antidote. Is it not strange that such

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~ foul streams flow from fountains so pure? and that what was doubtless designed by the Almighty to render us meek and lowly, should fill us with pride and insolence?

But there is a species of pride very different from those already mentioned, and far more astonishing; and that is, the strange and unaccountable pride of our follies, vices, and imperfections.

What is it after all, that men will not be proud of, when we see such as value themselves on their knowledge of mankind, make no scruple to boast of their success in the art of fraud and treachery? as if there were any real merit in deceiving their fellow-creatures, and that no qualities were so amiable as falsehood and dissimulation.

What

What is it men will not be proud of, when we see them degrade piety into weakness, and brand compassion with the name of folly; when we hear them boasting of their apathy as a perfection, and exulting in their inhumanity?

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Such is the fatal power and influence of example, that a time may come (and perhaps is not far from us) when idleness may be so fashionable a vice, that industry shall be looked upon as a reproach, and to do nothing, and think of nothing, shall be ranked amongst the greatest privileges of our nature.

Pride is of all vices the most unfortunate, and always fails of its end. The covetous man gains his point when he has amassed his treasures, and is brooding over his mammon: the sensualist gains his when he revels in the pleasures

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~ fures of sense, and, at least for a time, enjoys himself: whilst the proud man, instead of that deference and respect which he is in perpetual search of, is for the most part rewarded with nothing but contempt.

To make us cheerful and happy in each other, there must be an equality of condition; a kind of common chain, to link and unite the affections; the ground must be levelled, before we can walk together with any tolerable ease or satisfaction. But where there is pride, there must be distance and dependancy; and where dependance is, freedom cannot enter. The proud man, therefore, cuts himself off from the body of society, and is excluded from all the mutual endearments of social converse; he can keep company with none but those he must hate; associate with none but such

as

as he must despise. If he sets himself up as an idol, if he will have worship and adoration, he can receive it from none but fools or knaves; from fools who do not know what he is made of, or from knaves who do. What is it then to be proud? To live the life of an idol of wood or stone, and to be like unto it; to lose all the privileges and all the pleasures of our nature; to sacrifice every real blessing, for such as are merely imaginary; to be above the wants and necessities, and at the same time also above the joys and comforts of life; to be laughed at by our fellow-creatures, and despised by our Creator; to be the scorn and derision of men, the hatred and abomination of God! *And yet, as the Prophet says, we call the proud happy.*—If they are wise, it is a wisdom we ought to be ashamed of; if they

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they are happy, it is a happiness we have no reason to envy.

Let us then attend the commands of our God; he speaks to us every day by the voice of Death, that great teacher of mankind; commissioned by him to rule over the children of pride; to bind their kings in chains, their nobles in links of iron. He is the great leveller who subdueth all beneath his feet; from him who sitteth on a throne of glory, to him that is humbled in earth and ashes. Alas! when the thought of our final dissolution strikes our imagination, how do all the idle distinctions amongst us vanish and disappear! Where are the votaries of ambition, or the heroes of the war? Where are the rich, the powerful, the wise, and the learned? *The small and great are there! they shall lie*

*lie down alone in the dust, and the worms
shall cover them.*

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Let us therefore already imagine ourselves to be, what in a little time we inevitably must be, all upon a level, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. These considerations will most probably induce us to behave with humility towards each other, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but to love justice and mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. To lend our knowledge to instruct the ignorant; our power to protect the weak; our riches to relieve the poor and needy. If we would be esteemed the followers of Christ, we must act like him; we must *sloop* to imitate his meekness, if we would *rise* to inherit his favour; for he hath declared, that in the last day,

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day, he that exalteth himself, shall be
abased, and he that humbleth himself, and
he only, shall be exalted.

ON
U N I T Y.

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Y T I Z AU

S E R M O N V I I I.

P S A L M C X X X I I I. I.

*Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for
brethren to dwell together in unity.*

AMONGST all the indelible
traces, the glorious marks of di-
vine wisdom and power in the formation
of the universe, nothing hath perhaps
more awakened the minds of men to a
contemplation on the omniscience and
goodness of their Creator, than the
serious consideration of that constant
union and harmony, which the Supreme
Disposer of all things hath diffused over
all his works.

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Unity is the great chain which first
combined, and still holds together the
frame

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frame of nature, which bids different elements conspire, and different seasons join in sweet variety to make our habitation here pleasant and commodious, and promote the general ease and happiness of mankind.

It is observable that the same scheme of providence which God thought fit to constitute in the natural world, hath he also appointed in the moral one.

That man was made for union and society, doth sufficiently appear both from the frame and structure of his body, and all the qualities and passions of his mind; he was purposely made too ignorant to know, and too indigent to supply his own necessities; and is driven in spite of himself to ask the aid and assistance of his fellow creatures.

There

There is scarce a pleasure, or satisfaction in life, which the highest and most exalted amongst us does not often stand in need of; nor any state so low or contemptible, but has its comforts to enjoy, and some benefits or advantages to bestow on others.

Men, indeed, at first lived in a wild and confused state of barbarous freedom and independency, without laws to restrain, or rulers to govern them; but experience soon taught them that order and harmony were necessary to guard, and subordination to preserve their lives and liberties. Mutual complaints therefore were soon made, and mutual subjection complied with, till by degrees they had learned to shelter themselves from tyranny and oppression, under salutary laws and wholesome restrictions, and to strengthen that by union which

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nature had left weak and defenceless. As states rose, and kingdoms were established, the clouds of ignorance began to dissipate, arts and sciences grew up and flourished, and have from time to time been strengthened and improved.

In the subsequent discourse therefore, calculated to raise in you a desire of unity, of charity, and brotherly love, *that ye may be kindly affectioned one to another*, I propose to lay before you the advantages of union, as it may affect us in the various circumstances and connections of human life, whether we consider ourselves,

First, As Members of Society.

Secondly, As Friends and Relations.

Or, thirdly and lastly, As Christians.

And

And first, therefore, I shall consider SERM.
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it in regard to that influence which it should maintain over us, as members of that community to which we belong.

If we look back on the history of past times, and take a review of the rise, growth, and declension of those great states and empires which once shone so illustriously, and are now buried in ruins, it will be worth our observation to remark, that as they rose by piety and virtue to power and splendour, they sunk again into oblivion by vice and folly. While Greece and Rome continued; while every private man's ambition was centered in the public welfare, their lands were blest with plenty, and their battles crowned with conquest. While they were unanimous, they were successful, and while they were virtuous they were free. But no sooner had prof-

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perity debauched, and luxury and intemperance enervated them, than they were quickly corrupted by sloth and avarice, and soon after enslaved and subdued by civil broils and dissensions.

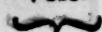
How often, and how grievously our own nation hath suffered from domestic feuds; in what scenes of desolation and bloodshed she hath been many times involved by religious and civil commotions, and how miraculously the gracious hand of Providence hath delivered us from the enemy and avenger; I need not, I believe, call to your remembrance.

To those discords and divisions, which but a few years since disturbed the peace and tranquillity of this nation, we were in a great measure indebted for the poor and contemptible figure we some time made, and for that almost universal depra-

depravity and corruption which had well nigh overwhelmed us; whilst, on the other hand, to our present harmony, agreement and unanimity, we may reasonably attribute no inconsiderable share of our late successes and of our present happiness; therefore it may be of service to us to recollect, that whenever distress and calamity attacked us, it was not so much our strength and numbers, as our Unity which saved us.

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As subjects therefore, it is apparent our public peace and happiness must depend on public unity; and as it happens in states and kingdoms, so will it ever do in private societies: in those which have been established in almost every country, for the carrying on, and improvement of trade and commerce, and the mutual interest of the members of them; or such as are meant only to re-

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relax the mind in the cheerful amusements of friendship and conversation; and in regard to both, it is an indisputable and an invariable truth, that the profit and the pleasure will always rise, or decay, in proportion to that union and harmony from whence they originally sprung, and on which alone they totally depend.

Men, considered as social creatures, derive their happiness from each other; and yet such is our pride, that it is with the utmost difficulty we are persuaded to rely on others for that which we would fain draw from ourselves only: we would all gladly be what in this world we were never designed to be, all sufficient, independent beings; and though it is a self-evident truth, and which one would think were obvious to every capacity, that all private safety, and the property of every individual, is founded on the
wel-

welfare of the public; yet so blind is self-love, that with the bulk of mankind we see recourse must be had to law and authority; they look on every endeavour to serve them, as so many acts of violence and oppression, and will not be easy, safe, or happy, unless compelled to it.

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So necessary is mutual good-humour and complacency in conversation, and the common affairs of life, that men, conscious how seldom real good-nature is to be met with, have substituted good-breeding in its room, which does indeed in some measure answer the end proposed, by checking that petulancy, which would otherwise disturb the peace of society; but after all, it is but a false jewel, which yields a faint momentary lustre: the true one will cost us but a very little more, which is of infinitely

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greater value, and so much longer duration. How much better then is the substance than the shadow ! If it is amiable but to appear pleased and happy in each other, how much better is it to be really so !

But it is not being in the same place, saying or doing the same things which will make us of the same mind one towards another ; this is by no means the union recommended by the holy psalmist, the bond which he would unite us in, the bond of charity. The harmony which he would teach us, is the harmony of the mind. The union which he so warmly enforces, is the union of the heart ; where that is wanting, the professions of the tongue are but as sounding brass, and as the tinkling cymbals.

But

But if a sincere and undissembled union of sentiments, if mutual complacency and good humour are so absolutely necessary in our public commerce with mankind, how much more so must they be, in our private and more interesting concerns, which will appear still more evident, when we come to consider ourselves. Secondly, As relations and friends, where union becomes absolutely necessary to our joy and happiness, and where the want of it is attended with such fatal consequences,

God hath implanted in every breast the principles of love and benevolence, but lest that principle should, like a drop of rain falling into the ocean, lose itself in a multiplicity of objects; he hath graciously thought fit to direct it, as it were, into proper channels; to confine it by inseparable connections, by the ties
of

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of kindred and the bond of natural affection. From this fountain flow all those domestic sweets which alleviate the cares and enhance the blessings of life. Those social duties, those tender relations, which act a double part, and whilst they make us happy here in the discharge of them, recommend us at the same time to the Almighty, and secure our future and everlasting happiness.

Here then, how joyful a thing it must be to dwell together in unity! and on the other hand, how fatal must be the effects of discord and division! How careful should we be, lest at any time envy should unravel, jealousy loosen, or anger dissolve the tie! Where there is, or where there ought to be much love, there should be much forgiveness also; because the stronger the connection, and the more solemn the engagement, the wider

wider is the breach and the greater is the aversion: and how horrible is it to see those whose blood, whose fame, fortune, and interests should be united, torn to pieces by hatred and animosities; to see the father divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother! to see all those tender ties of nature, which were designed to soften the ills of life, and lessen its cares, become at last its bitterest misfortunes!

This can only give us an image of a rude, uninformed world, a chaos of matter, as it stood before the creation, where all the elements were mixed together, and nothing reigned but discord, darkness, and confusion.

Whereas on the other hand, a well-regu-

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regulated family, where order and harmony are preserved, all obliging, and obliged by each other, where they are all blest by love and unity, is an image of the frame of nature after God had pronounced it good; an emblem of the universe, where each part is perfect in itself, and contributes at the same time to the beauty, magnificence, and duration of the whole.

Therefore, if we would live easily and happily with each other, to union of blood, interest and fortune, we must add also, union of sentiments of heart and soul. To benevolence we must add, forbearance and mutual complacency. In a world like this, so full of evils and so full of ignorance, interests must jar and opinions must differ; but as we are all liable to error, and all subject to passions, we must bear the faults, and pardon the weak-

weaknesses of each other, because it is a blessed and a joyful thing to dwell together in unity. SERM.
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Come we then to the last and great relation in which I proposed to lay before you, the indispensable duty of Union as Christians.

Our gospel is the gospel of peace; it becometh all men; but above all men it becometh Christians; it becometh those who walk in the house of God to walk as friends; not by our practice to contradict and give the lye to our doctrines, not by discord and animosities to subvert that religion which we are sworn to protect. *By this, says our Saviour, shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.* Alas! that distinguishing mark is, I fear, almost erased and worn out amongst us. Our church is
so

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so overrun with heresies and schisms, so torn by jarring sects and discordant factions, as to make her a bye-word unto the heathen, and to those who have no knowledge of her laws.

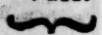
Nothing can so much debase religion, as the ill-placed zeal of its outrageous followers, who *bate* all that will not agree with them in *all*, even in things where it is of no consequence whether they agree or not. There are men who shew their love to God, by oppressing those whom he hath made, who never consent but to destroy; never unite but to persecute.

It cannot be expected, it never was designed by our Creator, that all men should think alike; but surely it may, it will be required of us, that we all endeavour to promote the unity of the church,

church, the glory of God; and the religion of our Saviour Christ.

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Let me then, above all things, recommend Unity to you as Christians. A house divided against itself can never stand. In the last age there were sects enough among us, and yet, as if discord were still ambitious of sowing more tares amongst us, fresh parties are every day springing up and increasing. To the fanatics and visionaries of the last century, whose decaying fabric still subsists, have succeeded a race of modern enthusiasts, whose tenets are more ridiculous as well as more anti-scriptural than any of their predecessors, as the notions which they endeavour to inculcate, are absolutely destructive of all religious union, and directly opposite both to the laws of Christ, and all the moral and social purposes of human society. For
shame,

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VIII.


shame, my brethren! let us at last, though late, unite and conquer; the partition still subsisting between some of us, is built of very slight materials; insensibly moulders away, and might easily be thrown down by the hand of charity and mutual love: let us hope, my brethren, to see that good work perfected, and let every one lend his necessary aid and assistance towards it.

Let not any difference of opinion in matters not essential, alienate our affections, or hinder us from kind and friendly offices. Let us be friends to all, of what sect, party, or profession whatsoever, who are the friends of honour and virtue; and have no enemies, but the enemies of God and his Son Jesus Christ. Let us reflect, that it was to their union and harmony we were indebted for the *exertion* of that truth on
which

which our religion depends : let us consider what light and lustre they throw on each other, and how exactly, and how blessedly all their predictions were fulfilled.

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If then we would be happy in our alliances, in our societies, our relations, our friendships, and all our mutual endearments, let us pray to that God who maketh men to be of one mind in one house, to pour into our hearts that spirit of unity and godly love, of benevolence, patience, and charity, and which may bless us with all the good things of this life, and bring us to those seats of rest and peace, of unity and concord, of tranquillity and happiness, which he hath prepared for the good and righteous in that which is to come.

ON THE,
PHARISAICAL CHRISTIAN.

THE

CHRISTIAN

S E R M O N IX.

MATTHEW V. 20.

Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

THE Scribes and Pharisees, whom SERM.
IX.
our blessed Saviour doth in the words of my text so severely reprehend, were men of such high rank and esteem amongst the Jews, as to command the deepest reverence, respect, and veneration from the multitude, who considered them, especially with regard to religious matters, as the most perfect examples of purity and virtue; to doubt therefore their truth, and to call in question their integrity; to unmask their sophisms, de-

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IX.

fect their frauds, and expose their hypocrisy, was a task which few would have the courage to enter upon, and still fewer the steadiness and resolution to execute: our Saviour notwithstanding, who came down upon earth to establish truth, without the least regard to any ill consequences that might arise to himself from such a conduct, boldly, strenuously, and perpetually opposed them.

When we consider the great influence, weight, and authority which these men possessed, we cannot but be astonished at the intrepidity of a private, indigent, and friendless individual, who could thus arraign the conduct, and condemn the principles of the first and most respectable characters in the kingdom: but the cause of religion, which had been so essentially hurt, demanded, the throne of righteousness, which had been shaken by fraud

fraud and dissimulation, and which was to be re-established by him, required this conduct at his hands.

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Of the superlative righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the vulgar, ever imposed upon by shew, pomp and parade, entertained so high an opinion, as to imagine, no doubt, that it could not possibly be exceeded: our Saviour, therefore, takes the first opportunity of undeceiving them in this important particular, and informs them, that if they could not perform a task which they seemed to think impracticable, that of exceeding the Pharisees, they must never flatter themselves with the most distant hope of the divine favour; or, as he strongly and emphatically expresses it, could in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.

As the character of the Pharisee was

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IX.

held in such abhorrence by the great founder of our religion, one would naturally have imagined that his followers would above all things have most carefully avoided it; it is notwithstanding most indisputable, that from the days of the apostles, there have been, and even to this day there are amongst us but too many of those whom we may properly style

PHARISAICAL CHRISTIANS:

Men who but too exactly resemble that hateful and contemptible sect, whom our Saviour so often and so severely condemns, and who, he solemnly assures us, can never enter into the kingdom of God; and of this melancholy truth we shall be fully convinced when I come, which I propose in the following discourse, to point out the peculiar marks by which they may be known, and those similar features

features by which they may so easily be distinguished. SERM.
IX.

The age we live in, is indeed an age of pharisaism; the morality of the Pharisees seems to be the only morality, and the righteousness of the Pharisees almost the only righteousness that is to be found amongst us. There is scarce any zeal left but fanaticism; any religion but enthusiasm. Since a set of ignorant and illiterate pretenders to piety and virtue have set up their standard and displayed their gaudy colours; it is astonishing to consider what crowds of silly men and women are daily flocking to it: the soldiers of Christ, the great captain of our salvation, are every hour deserting from him; three parts of them are gone over to Satan, his avowed enemy, and the fourth are daily lifting under the banners of methodism.

At

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IX.

At such a time therefore it may not
be improper to observe that,

The first striking resemblance which we trace, and which is visible to every eye, between the ancient and the modern Pharisee, is a perpetual affectation of, and pretence to extraordinary goodness and piety. The Pharisaical Christian openly declares that the kingdom of God, that kingdom which our Saviour has assured us he will never obtain, is the great object of all his views, the end, he will tell you, of every word and every action; to this he pretends to sacrifice every worldly concern, and fixing his eyes on heaven, overlooks and tramples upon every thing else. Religion, in short, is his trade, and righteousness his profession; he imagines that all piety consists in prayer, and that every virtue is centered in devotion: the consequence

sequence of this false and confined idea of true religion is, that he is always in a church or a tabernacle; like the old Pharisee he washes his cups and platters over and over, to shew his purity and attention at the same time, but too often neglecting the weightier matters of the law; whilst he is doing that duty to God which God doth *not* require of him, he neglects perhaps that duty to man which God *doth*, and *will* require of him: he sings psalms whilst he should be labouring in his calling, and starves his family out of pure goodness and devotion.

The next peculiar mark and characteristic of the Pharisaical Christian, is that singularity that constant desire of appearance not like other men, which distinguishes him as much from the rest of the world as the broad phylactery and
long

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long garments did his brethren of Judea. Vanity, or the love of praise and admiration, that reigning universal passion, takes place in religion, as well as in every other concern. The Pharisaical Christian therefore takes a particular pride in departing from common and vulgar forms ; he is always prescribing to himself some peculiar methods of acting, that shall draw upon him the observation of others; even in circumstances the most minute and indifferent, he affects to vary from those of his neighbour: instead of complying with established rites and ceremonies, he invents new modes of worship, and creates new duties which he performs with extraordinary zeal and alacrity: so long as he lives up to his own partial and imperfect rules of righteousness, he thinks himself at liberty to dispense with every other, and not unfrequently to break through

through every moral and social obligation.

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The habit of his body, as well as that of his mind, is generally distinguished by some stiff and awkward peculiarity, and by every motion and gesture he will endeavour to convince you how superior he is to all those forms and customs, by which the rest of mankind is influenced or directed.

With regard to points of faith and doctrine, with regard indeed to all the most essential parts of religion, the Pharisaical Christian seldom consults that great infallible code, the holy scripture, or the generally received interpretations of it; but for the most part forms his opinion intirely from the direction, and under the guidance of some favourite pastor, some darling enthusiast of his
own

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IX.

own sect, some Gamaliel of his own choice; of these there is abundance enough in the present age; to these he implicitly submits, and if an angel from heaven was to preach any other doctrines but such as he instills, the Pharisaical Christian would never listen to, or believe him.

In consequence of this blind attachment, three parts of his religion consist in the strict observance of certain little insignificant forms and habits, insensibly contracted and pertinaciously adhered to; the merit of which he has so magnified in his own eyes, as to think absolutely indispensable. With these men or women (for there are Pharisees of both sexes amongst us), a thousand noble and disinterested acts of true goodness and benevolence, would scarce atone for the breach of one punctilio.

As

As religion, or what he thinks proper to call so, consists of certain rules and precepts which he has laid down as the only terms of salvation, he deems the least departure from them in others as unpardonable. As his mind is too weak to adopt and embrace universal and consistent righteousness, so is it too narrow to comprehend universal charity; he is well assured, that there is but one door, and that of his own construction, by which men can enter into the kingdom of God; those therefore who will not follow him through it, can never be admitted at any other. The man who doth not think with *him*, is in his opinion incapable of thinking at *all*, and the man who will not be saved *his* way, cannot, he is morally certain, be saved at all.

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IX.

Another infallible mark distinguishing the Pharisaical Christian, and which in
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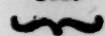
SERM.
IX.

the eyes of a meek and humble Saviour, at once destroyed all their pretensions to righteousness, is Pride, that high opinion which they always entertain of themselves, with a sovereign contempt for all the world beside. Pride of every kind is totally irreconcilable with Christianity; but spiritual pride is above all directly opposite and contradictory to it; it is the dropsy of the mind, and like that for the most part incurable. A prince is never so proud as a pope; and a man of the highest rank and fortune, will not behave with half the supercilious ostentation of a monk or a methodist. The Pharisaical Christian, therefore, is of all beings the most pompous and the most disagreeable; he assumes an air of confidence and self-importance, that throws all humble merit at an infinite distance from him; he considers himself as a creature of a superior order, and

passes

passes by the meek and lowly Christian with contempt and indifference, or perhaps, which is worse, treats him with a sneer of insulting pity; he commiserates your lost state, as irretrievably excluded from the number of the elect, and is concerned to find that you have no chance of eternal happiness; for like the church of Rome he always confines the goodness of God to the narrow limits of his own sect, and charitably consigns the rest of mankind to everlasting perdition.

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The Pharisaical Christian is always seen in the best pew of the church, as his Jewish predecessors took the first places in the synagogues; he assumes the power of directing in spiritual matters, however unfit he may be for it; takes the flock out of the hands of the pastor, is ever ready to direct him in his

duty, and to find fault with him in the performance of it.

Thus in every parish where the pernicious tenets of methodism have gained any influence, the minister, however irreproachable his conduct, however sound his doctrine may be, is held in no esteem.

The last distinguishing mark of the Pharisaical Christian, that leaven which leaveneth the whole lump, is Hypocrisy; a vice most abhorrent to the doctrine, and most opposite to the character of our blessed Redeemer: this imitation of ancient pharisaism is indeed the most glaring folly, as well as the most atrocious wickedness: to dissemble with man may be venial, because men dissemble with *us*; to dissemble with man may be profitable, because men may be deceived;

deceived; but to dissemble with the Almighty, is both impious and unprofitable. It is impious, because God never doth, or can dissemble with *us*, and it is unprofitable, because he is not to be deceived, deluded, or imposed on by us. Man, however, the Pharisaical Christian can, and constantly doth deceive, by his pompous pretences to extraordinary piety and goodness. To the unobserving and injudicious eye, the false jewel appears with a more specious and glaring lustre than the true; and so it is but too often with religion and virtue. The kingdoms of *men* are too often besieged and conquered by hypocrisy; but it can never subdue, never so much as enter into the kingdom of God: it cannot be supposed that a God of truth will ever permit those to enter into *his* presence, who support the cause of fraud and falsehood; it cannot be

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IX.


imagined, that the proud and haughty will ever meet in the same place with the meek and humble; that they will ever be permitted, or if they were permitted, that they would condescend to rank with those whom they had insulted, or to associate with those whom they had despised.

If then, my brethren, the kingdom of heaven is, as it doubtless ought to be, the great object of your wishes and desires, that seat of joy and happiness which you are all in pursuit of, do not be led aside into that broad but deceitful path which our Saviour hath assured you can never lead you to it. The road to this blessed habitation, lieth not, as the Pharisees have falsely directed you, over the lofty mountains of pride, but through the lowly vale of humility; not through the crooked and perplexing labyrinths of fraud

fraud and falsehood, but along the smooth and even plains of truth and virtue.

MAR 2
SERM.
IX

Let therefore your righteousness be not only unlike, but totally different from, and opposite to that of the Pharisees; avoid all pretences to extraordinary merit; condemn all idle singularity and affectation; despise hypocrisy, and abhor dissimulation. Never be proud of what you *are*; never pretend to be what you are *not*; place not your ill-grounded hopes of future happiness on the performance of merely external duties, but on the steady, uniform, and regular practice of your whole lives; shew your zeal in the cause of religion, not by *professing*, but by proving yourselves true Christians; do not boast that *you* are not like others, but endeavour so to speak, and so to act, that others may wish to be

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IX.


like *you* ; so shall your righteousness far exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and ye shall enter into the kingdom of God : ye shall enter into a place where there shall be no pride or haughtiness to oppress ; no fraud or hypocrisy to deceive you ; but where truth and happiness, joy and sincerity, righteousness and peace shall kiss each other.

ON

FOLLOWING THE MULTITUDE.

FOLLOWING THE MULTITUDE.

S E R M O N X.

EXODUS XXIII. 2.

*Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do
Evil.*

SO great is the power of example, so dangerous its prerogative, and so extensive its influence over the human mind, that we can never be sufficiently on our own guard against the evils which it may create, and the inconveniencies that may arise from it. The desire of imitation is perceivable, even from the moment of our birth, in all the faculties of our souls, and in all the actions and emotions of our bodies, insomuch, that every habit and gesture we acquire, and every sentiment we express, is but the copy or transcript from those who are
about

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X.

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X.
about us; it is a long time before we
begin to know and feel that we are free
and accountable beings, and that it is
incumbent on us to think and act for
ourselves; nor even when we are arrived
at this necessary truth, do we retain the
steady and constant conviction of it;
many have not the capacity, many have
not the inclination, and many more have
not that industry and vigilance which
are required in the discovery of truth,
and in the practice of virtue: and hence
it arises, that so many of the blind fol-
low their blinder leaders into sin and
misery; that so many are drawn away
insensibly, and misled by bad example
into the commission of those things
which their reason rejects as ridiculous
and absurd, or their conscience condemns
as sinful and unwarrantable; and the
danger of the seduction must always rise
in proportion to the art and power of
the

the seducer; the influence therefore of
an ill-judging multitude is of all things
most to be feared and avoided. There is
something in union and society, which
strongly recommends and enforces what-
ever it would promote, gives a kind of
sanction to every thing which it would
patronise or protect; those who follow
the multitude are too apt to imagine that
however a single judgment might be
misled, numbers would not engage in
the support of error, and thus are they
very easily misled into the wilderness of
folly. Each particular traveller infers
that the path must be right which so
many have agreed to tread in, and does
not at the same time consider that the
man who went before him, was induced
by the very same method of reasoning,
to step into it: but surely before we set
out on the short journey of life, it will
highly

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X.



highly become us to consider under whose direction we shall place ourselves.

Who is this guide whom we so willingly follow? or who is this master whom we so implicitly obey? A guide no doubt well able to direct; a master very fit to command; but will reason acknowledge this, or will experience confirm it? Do they not both warmly assert the direct contrary? Will they not tell us, that this guide is an ignorant and bold impostor, and so little able to save others from delusion, that it is itself perpetually deluded? A master so unfit to rule, that it hath in all ages been itself a slave to the worst of men, a mere instrument in the hands of the wicked, to serve in the cause of vice and folly? Shall we then be led by that which cannot guide itself, and governed by that which cannot govern itself? One would think

think our pride alone were sufficient to
secure us from this danger; and that
men would not voluntarily submit to be
slaves of those whom they might com-
mand, and dupes to those whom they
must despise.

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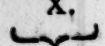
X.

There is not any thing which so de-
bases the human understanding, as a
tame, implicit submission to the will of
others, without the least previous trial
or examination; it is the infallible mark
of a timid and servile, or of a weak and
lethargic mind; it is indeed little less
than at once to give up all the privileges
of our nature, and to degrade our very
being.

We should consider, that by follow-
ing the multitude, we give up all pre-
tensions to knowledge and understand-
ing; that we acknowledge our infe-
riority,

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X.



riority, and bear witness to our own ignorance and incapacity; that if we go wrong therefore we have no excuse, and even if we go right we have no merit: thus we are sure of punishment on the one hand, and on the other can entertain no hopes of reward.

Let us moreover reflect, that when we have once joined the multitude, it is not easy to separate ourselves from it. Custom rivets our chains so fast, that they are not soon, or without difficulty broken through or shaken off.

A mind severely warped by prejudice, and habituated to error, is like a body bent and bowed down by age and infirmities, and neither can be restored to its original rectitude, but by that divine power which created them both.

The

The followers of fashion, and the votaries of vice, by a perpetual dissipation of thought, by a constant round of vanity, make themselves absolutely unfit to move in any other circle. By a perpetual commerce and connection with a corrupt world, we become too well acquainted with its fraud and treachery; we grow so conversant with the works of art and of men, that we forget the far nobler productions of nature and of God.

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X.

Men indeed are but too apt to flatter themselves, that society is the mother of safety, that there is always the best shelter in a crowd, and that the authority of millions is sufficient reason for siding with them. But surely whatever ill-grounded hopes we may place in the number of our forces, we shall find that

SERM. in a bad cause they can never secure us
 X. the victory.

The multitude on our side is but a poor excuse for our follies when we commit them, and will prove but an indifferent consolation to us when we suffer for them; if we trample on the commandments of God, and offend that Almighty power who made us, it is not the number of fellow criminals which can secure our pardon.

Have those who rebel against their sovereign, a stronger claim to his indulgence, because their allies are numerous, and their armies formidable? Would it not rather induce him with more severity to punish their pride, and chastise their insolence? Will the most gracious sovereign pardon one rebel, because thousands have engaged in the
 same

same cause with him? or is the just master obliged to forgive one servant, because all the rest have equally disobeyed him? SERM.
X.

What then shall we say to *our* king, or what shall we plead to *our* master? *If sinners intice thee*, says the wise man, *consent thou not*—but we have consented: *Be not conformed to this world*—we have conformed to it in every article: *Love not the world*—we have loved it, and what is more unpardonable, neither loved nor respected any thing else, not even him who made it; and can we then expect forgiveness, because so many have offended?

There was a time we know, when all mankind were become abominable, and all flesh had corrupted its way upon earth; and what was the fatal conse-

SERM.
X.

quence? It was swallowed up by an universal deluge.

God destroyed Sodom, because they were all wicked who inhabited, and brought Israel to captivity, because they were all, as the prophet says, grievous revolters.

On the other hand, so fond is mankind of running into extremes, we have lately seen, and continue every day to see, a set of frantic enthusiasts, who under the pretence of avoiding the errors of this fashionable multitude, have themselves constituted another multitude, perhaps equally dangerous to society, and the interests of true religion; a multitude who hold, or pretend to hold in abhorrence the commission of evil; who are so over righteous as totally to condemn every innocent amusement and cheer-

cheerful relaxation, and together with the follies and impertinencies, have shaken off all the social and relative duties of life, to give themselves up entirely, not to acts, but to specious protestations of piety and devotion; who make a merit of abstaining from what is forbidden, and at the same time neglect what is commanded.

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X.

I need not observe to you how many follow this multitude, nor is it I believe less evident that the followers of it, whatever they may imagine themselves employed in, will be found in the end to do evil.

That tabernacles are crowded, and churches thinned, by these pernicious sectaries, is too notorious; but at the same time, it is no infallible sign that they are in the right; for alas! if num-

SERM.
X.

bers were to determine in this point, how poor a figure would Christianity make in the known world, whilst Popery, Mahometanism, and even Paganism, are in that point so infinitely superior to it.

But it is perhaps in religion, as it is in every thing in which we are concerned; fashion will dictate, example will influence; pretenders start up in every art and science; quacks will be listened to, and prescribe in divinity as well as in physic, and whatever confident impostors assert, there are always fools enough to believe them; but truth after all will break through the clouds of error and prejudice, and shine forth in its native splendour.

Let us then, my brethren, redeem the time; let not the force of bad example influ-

influence, nor the power of fashion betray us. Surliness and contempt of the world is not goodness or religion; and on the other hand, a servile compliance with all its forms, is mean and unmanly; good breeding was meant to heighten and embellish the charms of virtue, but not to rival and supplant her; and such as make politeness alone the rule of their actions, are like those architects who prefer the ornaments and delicacy to the strength and usefulness of the building.

SERM.

X.



We are got into a foolish, frivolous way of spending time; let us get out of it as fast as we can; *he that despiseth little things*, says the wise man, *shall fall by little and little*: let us then shake off the chains of that tyrant, custom, and think, and see, and act for ourselves; if we want a guide, let us follow reason,

SERM.
X.

and not a multitude; virtue, and not fashion; God, and not Satan.

Let us no longer be misled by an idle, thoughtless crowd, who can only draw us into the paths of sin and sorrow, but choose an able pilot who will conduct us to the regions of peace and happiness.

There is, my brethren, one great example which we ought to follow, even the great standard of perfection, Jesus Christ the righteous; if we follow a multitude we must do evil, if we follow Christ we must do good; here, and here only, to give up our own judgment, must be meritorious, to yield up our reason will be an acceptable sacrifice; here we may part with our wisdom without shame, and our knowledge without regret, because his wisdom is better able to guide, his knowledge more extensive to direct

us;

us ; let us intreat him therefore to enlist
us under his banner, to take us into the
number of his faithful followers, to lead
us into all truth here, and finally to con-
duct us to everlasting joy and happiness
hereafter.

SERM.
X.



ON
VIGILANCE.

THE NATIONAL

S E R M O N XI.

2 T I M. IV. 5.

Watch thou in all things.

1 T H E S S. V. 6.

*Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch
and be sober.*

T H E R E cannot be an employment SERM.
XI.
more worthy of a grateful and 
generous mind, than to trace the good-
ness and power of the Almighty, conti-
nually displaying and exerting itself for
the benefit of mankind ; to observe the
same active energy which created, still
continuing to preserve and sustain, the
universe ; to remark that the eye of
God is always watchful over the works
of his hands ; and that all the powers
of nature, in imitation of their divine
Author,

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XI.

Author, are perpetually performing the various parts assigned them, and contributing towards the support of the whole visible creation. By that instinct, with which God hath thought fit to endow the animal world, every creature knows how to guard and defend itself against all that can distress or annoy it; hath an innate horror and aversion to every thing that can be prejudicial to it; is taught by nature to be upon its guard against every foe, and to be always anxious and vigilant for its own preservation. As far therefore as interest and nature go, that is to say, as far as God, whose instruments these are, doth guide and direct, so far all is right. The means are adequate to the end; order, harmony, and proportion are observed: but no sooner doth God let go the reins of government, and man is left

left to act for himself, but all is disorder, anarchy, and confusion: though he is furnished with arms sufficient to defend himself, yet doth he for the most part either lay down those arms and become a voluntary slave, or turns them with ill-judged and ill-directed strength and activity against himself; he is either not vigilant, or vigilant to a bad end, or vigilant to no end at all. He is industrious in procuring that which can only be pernicious to him, or he is totally idle and unpardonably remiss in the search of that on which alone his interest and his happiness must depend.

When we seriously consider what variety of accidents, temptations, and misfortunes, we are all liable to, what snares are laid for us, what foes we have to combat, and what dangers we are every hour exposed to, we shall doubtless

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XI.

doubtless be obliged to acknowledge, that the short but important advice of the Apostle, in my text, cannot perhaps be too frequently repeated, or too warmly recommended to us.

In points of importance we can never be too cautious; danger we know is the daughter of security, and presumption the parent of repentance; there is often the most danger where the least is apprehended, and the stronger demand for vigilance, where we allow the weakest exertion of it.

We are attacked with heat and violence on every side, and should therefore be armed at all points; and we may rest assured, that if there is the least opening in our armour, the enemy will most certainly point his arrows at it. The fortress which is not only invaded by foes from without,
but

but hath also traitors and rebels within, can hardly escape; and this is, unfortunately for us, the miserable condition of our own hearts, sin and Satan attacking, the world and our passions betraying us; do we not then, in so desperate a situation, stand in need of the utmost vigilance to secure and to defend us?

SERM.
XL
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Every day and every hour convinces us how necessary it is to be watchful in regard to all our temporal concerns; fraud and treachery are continually employed in finding out new methods of deceit, to amuse the indolent and unwary, infomuch that it is almost as difficult to preserve the good things of this life, as it is to acquire them; the harmlessness of the Dove is by no means sufficient to protect, unless the wisdom of the serpent be called in to aid and defend us.

Without

SERM.
XI.

Without labour and exercise the health of the body cannot possibly be preserved; it is this which gives strength and agility to our limbs, maintains the due balance in the powers of nature, gives a glow, spirit and beauty, to every feature; and, in short, animates and invigorates the whole frame; and in like manner vigilance is the exercise of the mind, without which the knowledge it acquires will soon be extinct, and the stores, which it hath laid in, will soon be exhausted; its powers will gradually sink into inaction, and all its faculties insensibly decay.

Whereas on the other hand, if constantly and regularly employed, it grows stronger by labour, and extended by exertion; the more danger it encounters, the more able is it to withstand them; success increases, conquest and confidence secures

cures victory; thus it continues to sub-
due, whilst there is an enemy to oppose,
and never gives up the field whilst there
are the least hopes to keep it.

SERMON
XX

Who is it that becomes learned?—
He who is vigilant and industrious; who
is ready to embrace the precepts of the
wise and sedulous; to procure the in-
struction of the learned; who applies
himself with diligence and assiduity to
the works of those who have distin-
guished themselves in past times; who
studies with care and attention the vo-
lumes of antiquity: who never throws
away an hour on trifles, luxury, or ex-
travagance, but is always busied in
knowledge, and employed in the gra-
dual improvement of his understanding.

To what then is the learned man
indebted for his treasures also, but to

SERM.
XI.

his vigilance and assiduity in the acquisition of it?

Who is it that becomes rich?—The man who is watchful after all the means of affluence; embraces every occasion; lays hold of every opportunity; who marks down every accident and occurrence by which his neighbour rose to prosperity, and carefully avoids those shoals and quicksands on which the fortunes of others have been shipwrecked.

Who is it that becomes great and powerful?—The man who watches the motions, and knows the folds and windings of the human heart; whose eye can trace the infirmities; whose understanding can dive into the thoughts of others: who is always vigilant, active, and industrious.

And

And what then is the source of all his success? who are his great guides to power and splendour but vigilance and alacrity?

SERM.

XI.

Thus useful, and thus salutary, is the advice of the Apostle in the common concerns of life. Let us examine then, whether that industry, which is so useful in our temporal and worldly affairs, may not be still more so in regard to what is of infinitely more importance and concern, our eternal happiness. Whether the same methods which men make use of to become (wise,) rich, and powerful, would not also enable them to become what is infinitely better,—wise, and good. Whether that vigilance which ensures pleasure and prosperity, might not ensure to us the far nobler possessions of wisdom and virtue.

Q 2

That

SERM.
XI.

That industry, which for the most part doth but contribute to make us the slaves of sin, might, if rightly applied, secure our freedom from it, and half the pains which men take to become guilty, would be more than sufficient to keep them innocent.

Let us not then, my brethren, sleep as do others. And first, I think, we should be extremely vigilant and careful with regard to the use we make of our time.

2dly, We should be vigilant and careful with regard to the connections and friendships we enter into.

And in regard to the employment of our time, it will become us to consider, *that* time is a precious talent, intrusted to our care; God will certainly one day call

call upon and demand of us, in what manner we have employed it; he did not give it us, that we might squander it away in trifling amusements, in a round of fashionable follies, but that we should lay it out in the improvement of our faculties, in purchasing the knowledge of his laws, and in the constant and steady execution of his commandments. Our glass runs, as it were, but for an hour, and we should be careful to watch every grain of sand.

Let not the force of bad example; therefore, warp us from our duty; let us be awake to all the offices of humanity, all the acts of devotion, all the functions of our profession and calling; not listless, indolent, and inactive, but like the divine Being, active and beneficent, employing our time in something

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serviceable

SERM.

XL

SERM.
XI.

serviceable to man, or expressive of our reliance on, and gratitude towards God.

When we consider the despotic power of custom, and the extensive influence of example, we are no longer at a loss to account for the multitude of those who wander in the maze of error, or tread the deceitful paths of guilt and misery; so easily are we induced to follow the steps of those whom we value and esteem; so willing are we rather to be misled by others, than take the pains ourselves to find out the right way, that we may perhaps even venture to assert, that where one man goes wrong by choice, hundreds do it from example, and thousands from indolence. To be carried on our journey by our friends, is a much pleasanter way of travelling than to take the reins into our own hands; and to drive down the stream

is

is much easier than to stem the torrent. SERM.
XI.

Be sober, therefore, be vigilant—*Let us not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober; our adversary, the devil, goeth about seeking whom he may devour; he need not indeed seek long, for we are ready enough to meet him half way; our weakness, however, doth not in the least abate or lessen his vigilance: he is perpetually soliciting our passions with every thing that can please and indulge them, setting before us temptations of every kind, finding out and soothing the ruling appetite, and, in short, omitting no artifice to delude and betray us,*

Such is our hard lot in this world, that all evil is in its nature pregnant and fertile, and the little good we have to boast of amongst us barren and un-

SERM.
XI.

fruitful. Health is single, it doth not impart itself to others, or diffuse its sweets: whilst, on the other hand, plagues, distempers, and diseases, are dangerous, from the infection they carry with them; they spread their contagion on every side, and multiply the misfortunes and sorrows of mankind: and thus it is too in regard to virtue and vice. With what rapidity does error, when once propagated, spread itself through all ranks and degrees of men! how do corruption and iniquity, when they have once crept into society, contaminate the whole mass of the people, and convey their poison into every limb! The eye of malevolence is sharp and piercing, spies out the blemishes of a character with wonderful acuteness and sagacity, whilst, what we generally term good nature, can scarce ever, or if ever, with the utmost difficulty, discover and distinguish

guish any of those few perfections which human nature is capable of attaining.

SERM.
XI.

Falsehood will fly, as it were, on the wings of the wind, and carry its tales to every corner of the earth; whilst truth lags behind; her steps, though sure, are slow and solemn, and she has neither vigour nor activity enough to pursue and overtake her enemy.—Vice, to say the truth, that mean and servile thing, which has no right to command, no authority to direct, doth by mere dint of industry and vigilance preside over and direct; whilst virtue, which should be the pilot, tamely resigns her power, sleeps at the helm, and leaves the shattered vessel to the mercy of the storm.

Mark the industry, and observe the pains which the profligate and licentious man

SERM.

XI.



man will take to draw over the good and virtuous to his party, to make him the companion of his follies, and lead him into a participation of his guilt.

Observe the free-thinker and the infidel, with what warmth he expresses himself, with what vehemence he exclaims against, with what rancour he abuses Christianity, with what zeal and ardour he solicits new converts to his opinion, and new followers of his doctrine; whilst the cold and languid believer wraps himself up with carelessness in the integrity of his heart, and leaves the victory and the triumph to his insulting rival. All the stores of science are drained, all the powers of eloquence are exhausted to point out and adorn the charms of folly, vice, and atheism; whilst scarce a hand is stretched out, or a voice heard, to

plead the deserted cause of truth, religion, and virtue.

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XI.

Shall we not then, my brethren, on our part, at least endeavour to gain industry over to the side of truth? Shall not man be as vigilant to promote his own welfare and happiness, as Sin and Satan are to secure his destruction? *Let us not then sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober:* let us watch the motions, and be guarded against the attacks of vice; let us watch the open attacks of our bold and rebellious passions, and above all, let us watch the secret sallies, the dangerous frauds of our own treacherous and delusive hearts; let us detect, subdue, and punish, or which is still more desirable, still more glorious, win them over to our true interest, persuade, convince, and convert them.

We

SERM.

XI.

We ought not surely to be a moment off our guard, when we consider what frail and transitory beings we are, when we consider that this day, this night, this very hour, our souls may be required of us; should we not then be careful to have our lamp ready trimmed when the bridegroom cometh? We know not the time when the Lord shall appear: *of that day and hour, knoweth no man; as a snare it shall come on all them that are on the face of the whole earth.*

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man.

ON THE
OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

S E R M O N XII.

P S A L M CXXXIX, 2.

*Thou art about my path, and about my bed,
and spiest out all my ways.*

TH E holy psalmist, in the words
of my text, hath with his usual
elegance and propriety, pointed out to
us, in one short sentence, two of the
greatest and most distinguishing attri-
butes of God, his Omnipresence and
Omniscience; the serious and devout
consideration of which united and inse-
parable perfections, cannot but conspire
to raise in us the most noble, worthy
and exalted idea of the Supreme Being.

It must indeed be confessed, (the best,
though poor excuse for inattention to a
truth so important) that confined as we
are

SERM.
XII.

SERM.
XII.
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are within the small compass of this sublunary world, and encircled by the narrow bounds of human knowledge, we are too apt to measure the powers of the Almighty by the unequal scale of our own limited capacities. Our horizon is quickly terminated, and because we cannot see for ourselves, we think it beyond the power of Omnipotence itself to enlarge the prospect. We cannot easily conceive a being extending itself through all space, yet whole and undivided; present at every period of time in every place; operating in every mode and form without change, diminution, or decay; comprehending at one view, all the various parts of the vast and boundless universe, and whilst it remains itself invisible, diffusing its influence, operating, enlivening and invigorating the whole visible creation.

It

It is, notwithstanding, at the same time, indisputable, that if there is a God, he must be both omnipresent and omniscient; he must see all things, or he cannot possibly be able to rule over, to govern, and to direct them.

SERM.
XII.

Amongst all those absurd and pernicious notions, which were so warmly embraced and propagated in the heathen world, there is not perhaps one so ridiculous, and withal so derogatory of the divine honour, as the doctrine attributed to Epicurus and his followers, who were weak enough to believe, or wicked enough to endeavour to make others believe, that the superiority of the divine nature, consisted merely in an exemption from care and solicitude; in rest, slothfulness, and a total inactivity: in pursuance of this strange opinion, they represented their Gods as utterly uncon-

SERM.

XII.



cerned about the happiness or misery of mankind, not in the least interested or solicitous in regard to their preservation; enjoying themselves (if such could be deemed enjoyment) in uninterrupted peace, in a cold and lifeless tranquillity, leaving at the same time every thing here below to the guidance of chance, fate, or they know not what invisible power which presided over human affairs, and kindly relieved them of the cares of mortality.

That deities thus idle and unworthy of the station assigned them, should meet with votaries as idle and as unworthy as themselves, will scarcely afford matter of surprise or admiration to us; nor can we therefore wonder to find the heathen world at that time sunk in indolence and luxury, careless of their conduct and behaviour; the slaves, in short, of every
vice

vice and folly that could degrade and debase human nature.

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XII.



But that the children of the God of Israel, that the enlightened followers of a crucified Saviour and Redeemer, those who acknowledge their steadfast belief in one unchangeable, active, beneficent power, in whom, and through whom, they move and live, and have their being, who every day and every hour experience his goodness, and may if they will be conscious that he is ever present with them: that they also should forget that he is omnipresent and omniscient, may well indeed raise our wonder and astonishment: that they should adopt, as so many do, these Epicurean principles, that they should imagine that their God also doth not concern himself in the conduct of human affairs; that he is not about their path and about their bed, and spying

SERM.
XII.

out all their ways, is, we must own,
 what cannot easily be accounted for.

Our God, we know, is a God who neither slumbers nor sleeps, a Being who doth not leave the work of his hands to the superintendence of chance or fate, but presides over, and protects that world which he hath made; a Being to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; who therefore, whatever vain suggestions pride may inspire us with, can never be imposed on, deceived, or deluded by us: is it not strange then, that whilst we busy ourselves in trifles, the meanest and most inconsiderable, and turn our eyes on every little spectacle which may amuse and divert us, an object so noble, and a spectacle so glorious as our Creator, and our God, should so frequently

quently as it doth, escape our observation?

SERM.
XII.

To what shall we attribute such a perverse inattention to that which is of the utmost concern to us? To what can we attribute it, but to that pride and self-sufficiency, which is the corruption and disgrace of human nature? As man is a most proud, and most insolent being, as he doth himself look down with scorn, contempt, and insensibility, on the inferior part of the creation; it is not impossible but that he may judge of the Almighty from his own weak and imperfect nature; he may imagine that God is too great and too exalted to look down upon us, or take into his hands the guidance of human affairs; that therefore he is safe in the commission of his crimes, for the Lord will not see

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them,

SERM.
XII.

them, neither shall the God of Israel regard them.

But it will highly become him to consider, that a judgment so rash will greatly heighten his guilt, and enflame his punishment: it will become him to consider, that God is a just, merciful, and beneficent being; that he thinks nothing beneath his notice, whatever we may think beneath our own; and that though he is exalted above the heaven of heavens, he doth, notwithstanding, humble himself to behold the things which are done among the children of men.

To forget that God is ever present with us, is a certain and infallible sign that we have no regard or esteem for him. When the affections are strongly attached to any thing, the idea of that
 darling

darling object is perpetually offering itself to the imagination, insomuch, that how far soever it may be removed from our corporeal view, no distance of time or place can separate, or disunite it from the mind, which dwells upon it continually with secret joy, and contemplates it with unspeakable satisfaction: objects, on the other hand, which are either indifferent, or disgustful to us, we naturally avoid when absent, and when present despise; those whom we have no love or value for, may talk to us for a long time without being heard; associate and converse with us, and at the very time be neither seen nor regarded by us: and in the same manner, he who loveth God, and he only, can behold him: the best means therefore of bringing him to our sight, is to reserve a place for him in our hearts; whilst he that either con-

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temns,

SERM.
XII.


temns, or stands in dread of, will always shut his eyes against him.

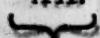
The case then is plainly and indisputably thus: God is to be seen in every thing that is around us, heard in the voice of every creature, felt in every motion, and read, in short, in every page of the great volume of the universe; but men are weak, perverse, obstinate, blind; some are unable, some are unwilling, thousands are totally indifferent about seeing him.

The foolish man hath not the inclination; the guilty man hath not the courage to look up to him; ambition dazzles our eyes, pleasure blinds, riches impair and weaken them. Those who are in the pursuit of folly, do not wish to see that God who would retard them in their course; and those who have
already

already overtaken it, are very unwilling to behold a being who would punish them for it. But what is still more extraordinary, is, that the same man who disbelieves, or is insensible of his presence at one time, will yet be very willing to acknowledge it at another; when we are engaged in the commission of sin, we endeavour to remove him as far from us as possible; but when we are oppressed by calamities, which perhaps are the consequences of that sin, we expect to find him near, and ready to relieve us: we would have him blind to our faults, but not to our necessities; his eyes shut on our iniquities, but his ears open to our prayers; always absent, in short, when we dread his displeasure, and always present when we stand in need of his protection.

SERM.
XII.
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But let us turn our eyes from the
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SERM.
XII.

consideration of those motives which induce men to dispute the omniscience of God, towards the advantages which will result to us from the conviction of this important truth.

When the eye of the master is over the servant, he is for the most part dutiful and obedient; he is cautious of offending, sedulous to please, and ready to serve and oblige him; but no sooner is he left at liberty, and the master departed from him, but the servant waxeth slothful and remiss, neglects his business, and becomes by degrees utterly unconcerned about his interest or success.

And again, Whilst the child is under the tuition, and under the inspection of his parents, he is seldom guilty of very heinous crimes, or flagrant enormities; he hath an awe and veneration of them, which

which serves to direct his conduct, and preserves him from the snares of vice which are spread round about him: but if he chances, like the prodigal, to leave his father, guide, and directors, he greatly deviates into the paths of error, and sinks into misery and ruin.

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XII.

Let us then apply the consideration to the matter here before us: Is not God the great Lord and Master, the general parent and protector of all mankind? and are we not every one of us his children and servants? Hath he not graciously condescended to guide us through this dangerous life, where we are beset with snares on every side, and walk, as Solomon says, *as it were on the battlements of the city*? Is he not therefore always with us? Earthly masters we know may be tyrannical and oppressive; earthly parents, partial and unjust; if
willing

SERM.
XII.
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willing, they may not be able, and if able, not always willing to direct our footsteps aright; they cannot be always present, and may very easily be snatched from us: but God can, and will, and must be always present with us: nothing can divide or disunite us from this great patron, parent, master; *neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

When we consider how very few of our actions will stand the test of human examination, or bear the scrutiny and narrow inspection even of our fellow creatures, how can we bear the thought of laying them open to our great Creator?

What

What must be the alarming terrors of the guilty, when he reflects, that amongst all those evil actions which he hath committed; all the idle, prophane, impious words which he hath uttered; all the loose and sinful thoughts which he hath encouraged; there is not one but that *thou O Lord knowest them altogether?* when he comes to reflect, that whilst he took so much pains to conceal his crimes from the eyes of mortals, those of God were all the while bent and fixed with indignation upon him?

That God, therefore, *is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways,* is one of those few invariable truths which it is in our power to attain, and which we should constantly keep in our minds; because a steady and habitual sense of the divine presence, could not

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XII.

not fail of extending its influence over our conduct and behaviour, and whilst it procured us every comfort and blessing in this life, would recommend us also to the divine favour and approbation in the next.

Would the liar dare to assert and support any notorious absolute falsehood to promote his interest and success in the world, were he conscious at the same time, that the ear of God were listening to him?

Would the evil speaker venture to asperse and calumniate his absent friend, if he imagined that the Father of Truth were at that very moment before him?

Would the spoiler, the ruffian, the murderer, ever dare to execute their bloody purposes; would they encourage them-

themselves with the delusive hopes of concealment and impunity; would they rely on the darkness of the night to shelter and preserve them; did they consider, themselves and their actions as open to the eyes of that all-seeing God, with whom, as David says, *the night is as clear as the day, and to whom the darkness and light are both alike?*

But lastly, As the omnipresence and omniscience of God, must, when seriously reflected on, be the most afflicting terror which the bad man can feel; so doth it open to the good and religious, a prospect of unspeakable joy and felicity.

How great a satisfaction must it be to the good and virtuous man, to reflect, that though he is aspersed and calumniated by the cruel and malicious, there is a candid and impartial judge, to whom

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SERM.
XII.

he may appeal for the uprightness of his intention, and the integrity of his heart; that there is an eye, beholding him, which doth not see through the false glass of prejudice, nor the deceitful medium of self-love!

He is about our path; can we desire a better guide and director in it? *He is about our bed*; and who is so fit to watch over our slumbers, and guard our repose, as that Being, who himself doth neither slumber nor sleep? *He spieth out all our ways*; and can we wish for a nobler protector than that almighty, benevolent Power, who is always watchful for our safety, solicitous for our welfare, and always anxious for our preservation?

Let us then always imagine (what must be always true), that the Supreme
Being

Being is ever present with us ; to him, SERM.
XII.
therefore let us apply in every exigency ;
ask his approbation and consent to every
word and every action, before we venture
to speak, or to act at all ; when we
rise up to labour, and when we lie down
to rest, let us implore his aid, and solicit
his protection.

Let us implore him to whom all hearts
are open, all desires known, and from
whom no secrets are hidden, to *cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of
his Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love
him, and worthily magnify his holy name,
through Christ our Lord.*

On the Omnipresence of God

There is ever present with us, to the
foremost as we apply to every thing
all his affection and desire to
know and every action, and we
are to think on to God at all times
the up to him, and let us be
to God, to be complete in all things

and to be complete in all things
and to be complete in all things
and to be complete in all things
and to be complete in all things

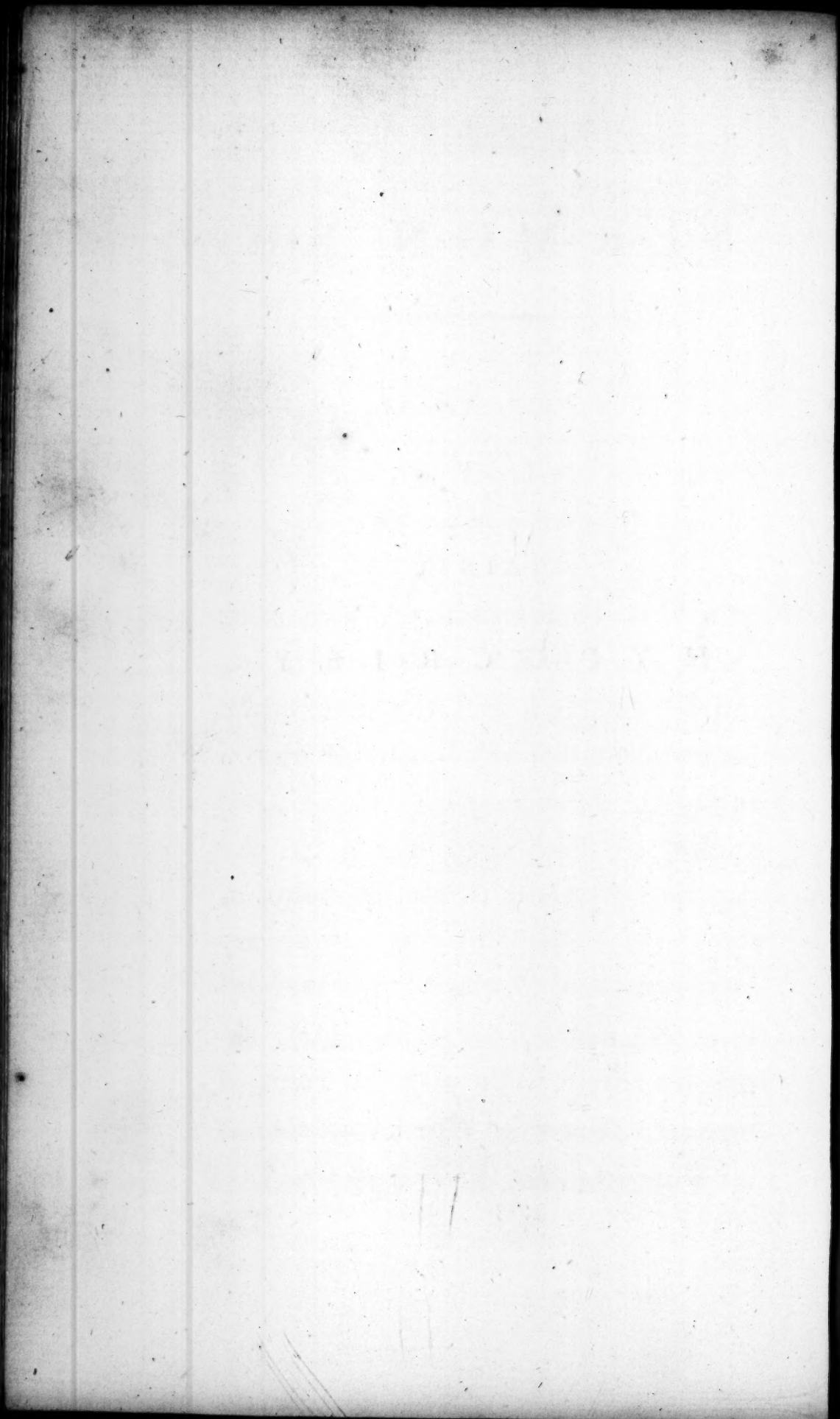
and to be complete in all things
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AGAINST

H Y P O C R I S Y.



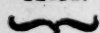
S E R M O N XIII.

LUKE XII. I.

*Beware ye of the Leaven of the Pharisees,
which is Hypocrisy.*

OUR Blessed Saviour, who came down from heaven to reform and instruct mankind, and who never whilst on earth omitted any favourable opportunity of recommending virtue, and severely rebuking vice, having, as the Apostle informs us in the beginning of the verse, assembled together a very large concourse of people, who crowded from all parts to see and hear him, begins his address to them in the words of my text, *Beware ye, says he, of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is Hypocrisy.*

SERM.
XIII.
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SERM.  
XIII.

The first vice against which he cautioned them, was, *that* to which they were probably *most* addicted, and which he had himself the greatest abhorrence of: and as he spake at this time with authority, and as the nature and extent of his divine mission required, he makes no scruple of openly attacking those who were most remarkably guilty of it, and with great propriety stiles it the *leaven* of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were, notwithstanding, a set of men at this time held in great esteem and veneration by the multitude, whom they easily deceived by a more than ordinary appearance of sanctity and devotion; they fasted often, made long prayers, gave alms plentifully, tithed even mint and cummin; they dealt, in short, much like our modern methodists, in works of supererogation, affected great austerity, and boasted of more purity and integrity than  
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the rest of mankind; but at the same time were deficient in many of the important duties; they were pleased with the pomp and parade, the trappings and ornaments of religion, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, and were, in short, after all their pretences, no better in reality, than downright hypocrites and impostors; men who had (as is too often the case) more wit than honesty, more pride than merit, and more knowledge than virtue. By their specious behaviour they had, however, gained great influence and interest, and were generally employed in those offices which required the greatest talents and abilities, and on this very account our Saviour rebuked them with the greater freedom, because no doubt he thought them capable of doing more injury to his cause than any other set of men whatever: and accordingly we find that whenever



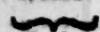
SERM.  
XIII.

he speaks of them, it is with a warmth of indignation and bitterness of reproach which he *very seldom* makes use of on any other occasion; he always censures them with that zeal which it became the God of truth to express against falsehood and deceit, and chastises them with that severity which they no doubt highly deserved. And if we seriously reflect on what in the following discourse I propose more fully to consider—the fatal and destructive consequences of this vice, we shall not wonder either at the warmth of his resentment, the frequency of his admonitions concerning it, or the heavy judgments which he so often denounced against it.

Though, to every sober and thinking man to be thoroughly satisfied that any action was forbidden by God, were doubtless sufficient to deter him from the commission

mission of it; yet, to those who are notwithstanding so obstinate and so abandoned as to continue in the practice of this vice, it may not be amiss to represent to them the fatal consequences of it, at it affects the various relations in which we stand towards God, our neighbour and ourselves, and to shew how pernicious and destructive they are in regard to every one of them.

And first then, Hypocrisy is a breach of our duty towards God, as it is a most daring and most insolent contempt of him; it is no less indeed than to doubt his Godhead, and to dispute his omniscience, and this every hypocrite is guilty of. *The God of Israel*, says he, *shall not see it, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it*; that is, he to whom all hearts are open shall not know *mine*; that eye which pierceth into every thing *else*, shall  
not

SERM.  
XIII.

not be able to discern *my* secrets. Can any thing be more vile or impious, and at the same time more ridiculous and absurd?

One of the principal sources of incredulity in all ages, has been the hypocrisy of those who have *pretended* to acknowledge the true faith. From hypocrisy, religion has suffered from the beginning of time, and must continue to suffer even to the end of it. Our Saviour himself was always contending with it; he met indeed with little else than hypocrisy from those who were about him, whilst he lived, and died at last a sacrifice to fraud and dissimulation. Even his disciples, who had left all and followed him, we are told, when he was in danger and tribulation, forsook him and fled; his followers were *hypocrites* and *deserted* him: Peter



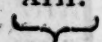
Peter was a *Hypocrite* and denyed him ;  
Judas was a *hypocrite* and betrayed him.

SERM.  
XIII.

But let us, to bring the matter closer to ourselves, reflect a little on what I proposed, secondly, To consider the evil consequences of this vice, in regard to our relations and connections with one another.

Mutual trust and confidence is the great bond of Society, without which it cannot possibly subsist; it is this on which both public and private happiness must more immediately depend; from sincerity, uprightness, and integrity must flow all the refined pleasures and sweetest endearments of life; this is the great corner stone on which we must build all our hopes, and when it is once removed, they will stand on a very weak and tottering foundation. The search of truth  
is



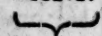
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is the great and important business of our lives, the end of all our words and actions; the hypocrite therefore acts in direct opposition to God and nature, puts a stop, as far as in *him* lies, to the interest and happiness of his fellow-creatures, enters into an alliance with Satan, and counteracts the *designs* of the Almighty.

There is nothing which is more disgusting to the open and ingenuous mind at its first entrance into, and commerce with the world, than that hypocrisy it meets with, and that dissimulation which it is forced, as it were, to practise in compliance with the modes and fashions of the age. Custom has indeed established and given a kind of sanction to it; but there is something in it, notwithstanding, which greatly shocks the natural delicacy of chaste and unblemished youth. By the  
force

force of example, and the influence of the multitude, it is brought indeed at last, but too soon, to the practice of what it at first abhorred; and hence it arises, that in the earlier part of life we meet with an openness and freedom which never fails to recommend itself to our esteem and approbation; but in the latter season, scarce any thing but doubts and diffidence. Youth is gay, fearless, and honest; age ever wary and designing, too often hypocritical: those who know mankind best, have been ofteneft deceived by them, and therefore repose the less trust and confidence in others; this naturally loosens the ties of friendship, and the bonds of society, and, amongst many other circumstances, perhaps tends in a great measure to make the winter of our days so gloomy and uncomfortable, as it is most generally found to be.

Whilst

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Whilst we travel in a plain and smooth track, without fear or apprehension of danger or treachery, the paths of life are agreeable and delightful; but when we once come to be afraid, every step we take, of falling into snares and pit-falls, there is very little pleasure in the journey, and we begin to wish ourselves every hour nearer to the end of it.

But *another* ill consequence arising from the practice of this vice, is, that it deprives virtue of that praise and esteem amongst men, which is so justly due to her.

Amongst all the advantages which arise from a steady and uniform obedience to the laws of God, and the practice of religion, the tribute of esteem and veneration which they are for the most part sure to meet with even from the  
most



most vicious and abandoned, is by no means the *least considerable*; and it is this which doth perhaps in a great measure induce the hypocrite to put on the *appearance* of piety and goodness, that he may acquire that reward which is so frequently bestowed on the *reality*. The original has so strong and so indisputable a claim to our admiration, that even the most lame and imperfect copy of it, seldom fails of attracting our esteem and veneration: thus virtue is stripped of her inheritance, vice tricks herself out in her attire, puts in a false title to the estate, and bereaves her of her patrimony.

What altars of praise have been raised,  
what divine honours have been paid,  
what incense has been offered up to false  
prophets, imaginary saints, and martyrs!  
What pious frauds have been made use  
of,



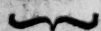
of, to recommend and adorn the characters of frantic visionaries and enthusiasts, disfiguring hypocrites and impostors, in all ages and nations, from the priests of Baal to the followers of Mahomet !

But hypocrisy, even when discovered, always discredits virtue, because when men have been often deceived, they grow scrupulous and cautious : because a false Esau has imposed upon us, we begin like Isaac even to suspect the true : after we have suffered for our credulity on one hand, we run into a total unbelief on the other ; and because the appearance of virtue betrayed us, we come at last to doubt the reality, and even the existence of it. Because many do evil, we are too apt to cry out with the psalmist, *there is none that doth good, no not one.* It was this which made the most virtuous of heathens say, in his last moments,

ments, that virtue was nothing but a name; it was this which almost persuaded the good and patient Job to distrust the providence of his Creator, and it was this which raised such doubts and despair in the breast of the holy psalmist, and caused him to cry out in anguish, that *he had cleansed his heart in vain, and washed his hands in innocency.*

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When those who have for a long time worn the disguise of public spirit, are at last detected; when the mean and mercenary views by which they are actuated are laid open; when their zeal is found to be self-interest, and their affected patriotism degenerates into avarice or ambition; does it not greatly damp and discourage the friends of liberty, and almost extinguish that generous love of their country, which is the natural inmate of every noble breast?

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But hypocrisy, as it is the most hateful, so is it also the most dangerous enemy to the peace and happiness of mankind; the serpent who lurks unseen and unsuspected, is more formidable than the lion who roams through the desert, and gives us notice of his approach; some of those evil affections to which we are subjected, have a mixture of bravery and generosity in them, but hypocrisy is the vice of cowards. It is the plague which walketh in darkness, and is afraid to walk at the noon day; it is the business of pirates, whose constant employment it is to plunder and destroy, and who therefore hang out false colours, and display the banners of friendship to entice those whom they would devour.

Such and so great are (amongst the infinite number which might be mentioned) some of the fatal consequences  
of



of this vice. And if such they are, it will be but common prudence in us to consider, in the second place, what the consequences may be in regard to ourselves: what great and mighty advantages will result from it; what those treasures are which hypocrisy has to bestow in recompense for that innocence which we part with, and that integrity which we sacrifice in the pursuit of it; a mine no doubt of inexhaustible riches; a fund of solid and permanent felicity. Alas! so far from it, that all which hypocrisy can give us, is barely this;

Very poor and uncertain hopes of short, transitory enjoyment here, and a very dismal and dreary prospect of certain and unavoidable misery hereafter.

For first, in regard to the evil consequences from his fellow-creatures, it



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will become the hypocrite to consider, that he is no longer safe than whilst he is concealed; he is in a perpetual state of enmity with mankind, and therefore must expect to meet with perpetual opposition: if the mask fall off and discover him, he sinks immediately into the lowest and most despicable condition; he is laughed at and despised by all. Every word he utters will from that hour be suspected, and every action condemned, even truth will not meet with credit from his lips, nor virtue itself recommend him to esteem.

And this we know very frequently happens, for when the varnish of dissimulation is laid on by an awkward hand, it is soon washed away; when the whitening is rubbed off the sepulchre, to make use of our Saviour's allusion, the rotten bones are quickly discovered. Besides, that  
in

in this case the features of the mind are in an unnatural state, and like those of the face when distorted, will be continually endeavouring to resume their original ease and position. So that the hypocrite's work is always beginning; his house is built upon the sand, and is quickly washed away; he walks, as Solomon says, *as it were on the battlements of the city*, and the least false step throws him head-long down to ruin and destruction.

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Happy were it for the hypocrite, if the ignominy and contempt which he may chance to incur from his fellow-creatures were his only punishment; but there is another judge to whom he must give up his account; another and a heavier sentence is reserved for him.

It often happens that one weak finite creature shall deceive and delude ano-

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ther ; but who shall delude or deceive the Lord and Creator of them both ? *There is nothing covered which shall not be revealed ; neither hid that shall not be known : he that made the eye, shall he not see ? and he that made the ear, shall he not hear ? He is about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways.* What then must the hypocrite expect, what must be the fate of these men ? Doubtless that they shall suddenly consume, perish, and come to a fearful end.

A time must come when the secrets of all men shall be laid open, when many of those actions which have perhaps so dazzled, and astonished us with specious appearances of grandeur, will be discovered to have sprung from the meanest and most selfish motives ; a place must one day be visited, where  
every

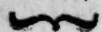


every thing will put on its true and native colour, where the hypocrite and his hope must perish together. The time may come when he who has been esteemed and respected for his goodness and piety by weak and short-sighted men, may be punished for his wickedness by the justice of an all-seeing God, when many perhaps of those who have been canonized for saints in this world, may inherit the portion of sinners in the other.

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Since then, my brethren, the practice of this vice is attended with such fatal consequences both to others and to ourselves; since its advantages are so few and so uncertain, and the guilt of it so heinous and offensive, what remains that can possibly persuade us to a continuance in it?



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What but the fatal influence of a corrupt world, and the bad example of a licentious age? Hypocrisy is fashionable, and therefore we pursue it; and for the same reason, we might be slanderers, infidels, atheists, murderers, adulterers, guilty, in short, of every human vice; the world indeed is scarce any thing but hypocrisy.

The refinement and ingenuity of modern times, has invented as great a variety of disguises to hide the soul, as of habits to cover and adorn the body; the face is no longer the index of the mind, nor the tongue the interpreter of the heart; almost every feature is studied, and every gesture marked out, and determined, and dissimulation is so universal, that were it not for that artless simplicity which youth sometimes presents to us, we should be almost inclined to

to dispute that such a virtue as sincerity were left amongst us, and be ready to cry out with the holy psalmist, *that faith and truth were departed from among the children of men.*

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We are beset with falsehood and hypocrisy on every side: what are all our passions, but so many base, delusive hypocrites, who pretend to bestow pleasure and happiness, and then miserably deceive and betray us; who, like Satan, first fawn upon and cajole, and when they have us in possession, destroy and torment us?

But will this plead in our favour with those men whom we have betrayed? Will it procure our pardon from that God whom we have offended? Whilst we are so proud of deceiving others, we are in reality, only deceiving ourselves. Instead  
of

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}

of amassing a goodly treasure, as we fondly imagine, we are only contracting a debt, that debt which we owe to truth and virtue, and which God, who is their faithful steward, will not fail one day to require at our hands.

Let us then shake off the chains of that tyrant, custom, and be no longer the slaves of passion and prejudice; the road of truth and sincerity is smooth and easy, but the labyrinth of falsehood is full of crooked and perplexing intricacies; her ways are not ways of pleasantness, nor can they ever be the paths of peace.

Let us reflect that God is always sincere towards us, and therefore we should be so to him; that it would be ingratitude to deceive him if we *could*, and that it is the height of folly to attempt it when we *cannot*.

*Let*



*Let us then beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy:* Let us always stick to truth and sincerity; the voice of nature requires it at our hands, the God of nature demands it; it is unprofitable to dissemble, and therefore we should neglect it; it is mean, and therefore we should despise it; it is wicked and destructive of our interest, and therefore we should avoid and detest it.

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I cannot conclude this discourse better than by a caution against hypocrisy:— In all our connections with each other, be open, honest, and ingenuous, never *appearing*, or *pretending* to be what we are *not*; never lie, flatter, or deceive; never profess friendships which we do not feel; boast of virtues which we have not; deny or conceal those vices and frailties which we have.

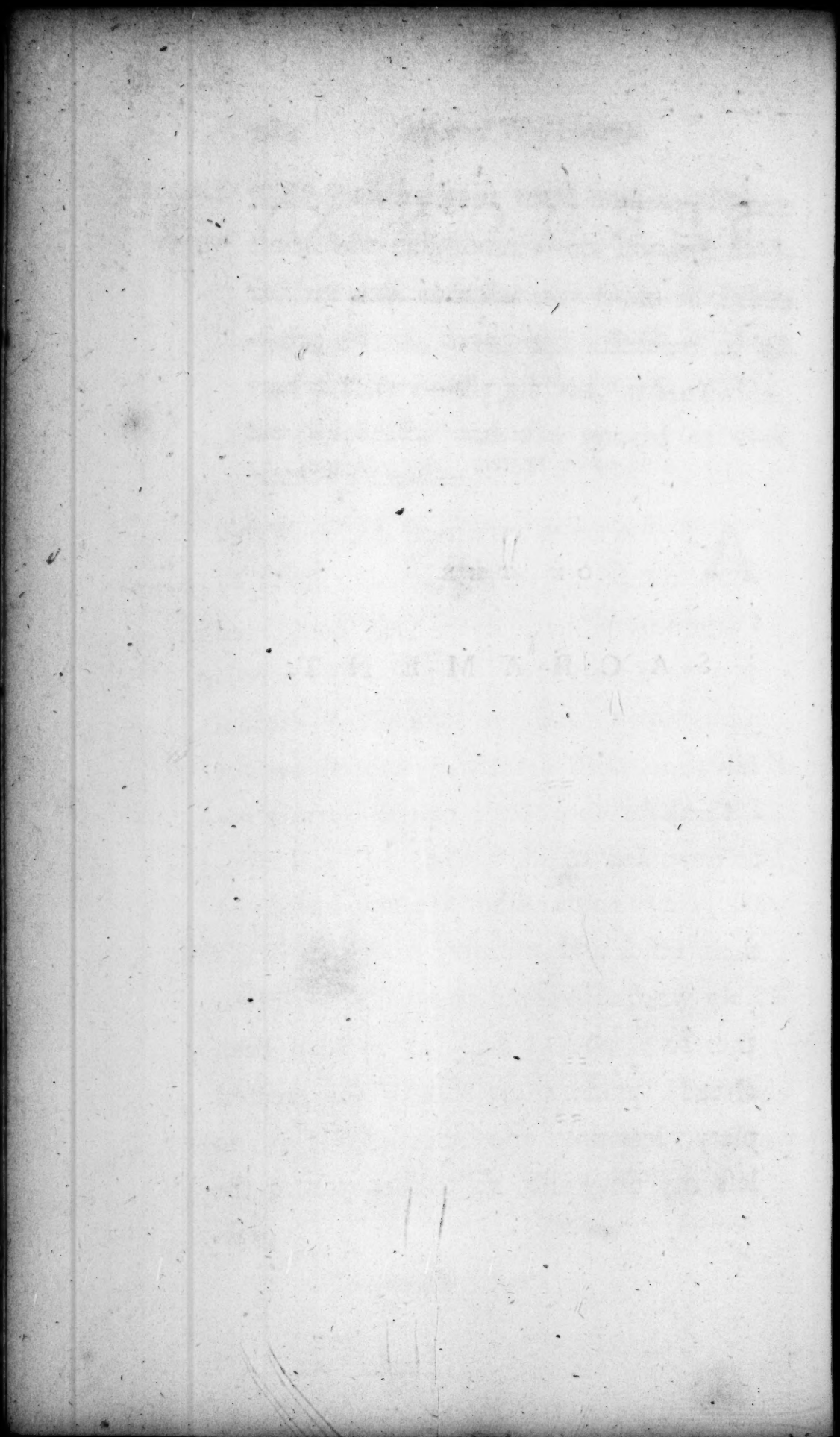
So



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So shall we gain trust and confidence from our neighbours—an inward satisfaction and complacency from ourselves—the esteem, love, and affection of all *good men here*—the pardon, approbation, the applause, and the reward of God himself hereafter,

ON THE  
SACRAMENT.



# S E R M O N XIV.

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I C O R I N T H I A N S XI. 24.

*This do in remembrance of me.*

**A**S a ferious attention to, and frequent participation of the Holy Communion hath ever been considered as a very important article of our religious duty, and on which our eternal salvation doth greatly depend, it cannot I think be too often, or too warmly recommended to all, and by all, and especially by those who are appointed by their office and ministry to deliver God's holy word and commandments. As often therefore, and as fully as it hath been already spoken to by men of the greatest piety, learning and abilities, it is no less my duty also, to exhort you to the  
prac-

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practice of it. I propose therefore in the following discourse to lay before you, first, The great usefulness and excellence of this divine institution; and secondly, The obligations which we all lie under to comply with it.

First then, In regard to its great use and excellency: Such is the amazing baseness and ingratitude of mankind, that though the least and most trifling injuries done to them, are very seldom, even long after they have been done, either forgot or forgiven; benefits on the other hand, frequently conferred, are for the most part quickly and easily buried in oblivion. Our Saviour therefore, who well knew that nature which he had assumed, after a life spent in the service of man, wisely foresaw that his servants, like others, when their master was gone away from them, would be-  
come

come every day more and more neglectful of those commandments which he had left behind him, and in a long tract of time, perhaps, utterly forget every thing which he had *done* for them; to the end, therefore, that we should always remember his exceeding great love in living and dying for us; he instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort, as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we do shew the Lord's death till he come; *this do*, says he, *in remembrance of me*.

The religion of Christ, none can object to, as loaded with positive institutions. Surely his yoke (if such we may term it) is easy; his burthen, if such we will esteem it, is extremely light. He might have said, ye see how I afflict

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and torment myself for your sakes; how I have fasted and prayed: go therefore, lash and torment yourselves, abstain from food and nourishment, take no pleasure, receive no comfort, seek nothing but sorrow, acquaint yourselves with nothing but grief, *do this in remembrance of me*: but instead of this, he only imposeth on us this light and easy labour; a task which even carries with it delight in the performance, and pleasure in the execution of it; *do this only in remembrance of me*; now and then assemble yourselves together, and partake of this feast of love which I have prepared for you: do this, as if he had said to us, if I have deserved any thing at your hands, if whilst upon earth, my pleasure and my business was to go about doing good to you; if in heaven, I am now interceding for you, do not utterly forget your benefactor; do not lay aside  
all



all thoughts of your friend and mediator ; do not grudge a little time to converse with me ; remember *me*, and I will not *forget*, will not leave nor forsake *you* ; forgive each other before you come to this table, and when you rise from it go home with cheerfulness, and be kind to, and love one another.

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Thus we may suppose him graciously condescending to reason with us ; this is the utmost extent of his request, and shall we dare deny a compliance with it ? *This do*, says our Saviour, *in remembrance of me*. Amongst all those refined and delicate sensations which delight the generous and grateful mind, there is not one more productive of inward joy and satisfaction, than the pleasing recollection of those benefits which have been conferred on us by our friends : with what joy do we reflect on the gift, and



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on the giver, and with what pleasure do we place before our eyes every minute circumstance, every motion and gesture that accompanied it! what then should be our praise and thanksgiving, what should be our joy and pleasure in calling to mind in the holy sacrament, the amazing beneficence, goodness, and condescension of our Divine Benefactor, whom in this solemn office we assemble to commemorate! Is all that we ever received at the hands of others, to be compared with that love which he expressed, or with those blessings which he bestowed upon us?

But besides the first and great design of the Holy Sacrament, namely, the commemoration of our Saviour's life, his sufferings and death, which must fill every grateful heart with an adoration of his goodness, and a veneration for  
his

his laws, there are also numberless advantages flowing to mankind from this divine institution; and among others, this is by no means the least, or most inconsiderable; namely, that if performed as it ought to be performed, it must of necessity tend to create mutual harmony, love, and affection among men: we see every day what great and useful designs have been carried on even by very small societies of men, whose views and interests have been the same, and who have heartily united to serve and support each other: the conditions we have required in every worthy communicant, are the previous laying aside all strife and envying, all jealousies, quarrels, and animosities: *If any man say he loves God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: And again, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift; and doubtless neither our gifts*

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nor we ourselves, shall be favourably received at the altar, unless we first banish malice and hatred from our hearts, and fill them with love and charity.

The blessed Sacrament therefore should be looked on by every worthy communicant, as the bond of unity; the extensive chain of love, which links us to our fellow Christians, and which should naturally remind us of that general relation which we bear to each other, and which should be constantly and steadily displaying itself in acts of mutual love, charity, and beneficence.

The Rubrick prefatory to the order of administration of the Holy Sacrament, points out to us the exact duty both of priest and people in this particular; the minister is there, we see, invested with power to inquire into the character and  
beha-



behaviour of all those who would communicate, and to exhort them, if they have been guilty of any flagrant and conspicuous crimes, to repent and amend before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; he is there empowered also, to prevent those between whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign, to be partakers of that holy communion: were he now to perform this pious office, to exert this power, it might perhaps prove beneficial to society in general, and advantageous to every particular member of it; it might be a means of preventing all those cruel divisions which separate families, break friendship, and unloose the bonds of peace; it might promote private happiness, by reconciling friends and brethren, and preserve public tranquillity, by ending disputes amicably, without tedious and unprofitable law-suits: so true, and



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so incontestable is it, that in all nations where true Christian religion is established, that aid and support which is by the state afforded to the church, is amply repaid by those reciprocal benefits which accrue to it from that support: since the best way to ensure obedience to human laws, is to enforce the divine. For were we punctually to perform the commandments of God, the ordinances of men would be almost unnecessary, and our huge large body of laws, which has swelled to so enormous a bulk, might then be reduced to a very narrow compass.

With regard to the intrinsic excellency of this institution, I shall here beg leave to observe, that it hath by a kind of interfering providence, kept up and maintained its dignity and solemnity in spite of all opposition, and even in an age  
when

when scarce any other part of our religion has escaped the ridicule of scoffers : there is something, to which indeed we are indebted partly to the great reformers of our church, in the manner of the celebration of it, which inspires an awe and veneration even in the most profligate and abandoned : it has indeed been said, (and what that is false and impious has not been said?) by the enemies of our holy religion, that those who frequent the table of the Lord, are hypocrites and dissemblers, that they are equally base, corrupt, and uncharitable after, as they were before the performance of this duty; but this is an assertion without proof or foundation; for surely we may venture to affirm, and experience justifies it, that such as do frequently attend the holy communion, are very seldom convicted by the world of any flagrant crimes, are very seldom men of bad  
lives

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lives or characters. Weaknesses and imperfections we are all liable to, but that a man can often receive the blessed sacrament, repent of any known sins, and yet continue to commit those sins; his conscience every time reproaching him, as it must do for such behaviour, is an instance of complicated, of continued impiety, it is uncharitable to suppose any man capable of; and it is withal most ridiculous and absurd, because no worldly views could influence him to act thus, as every man at this time, and in this nation, is left, perhaps too much so, at liberty in this point; and in an age wherein piety is so little regarded or esteemed, and the want of it so little censured, the mere affectation of it could answer no end or purpose whatever.

But further, men from the various and necessary distinctions of life from rank,



rank, fortune, and profession, are separated from each other, and there are some degrees of life which always keep them so: that is to say, the very high and very low: and hence arises this misfortune, that the great are the proud and insolent, the poor mean and miserable; the former triumph and oppress, the latter sink and despair; the one think themselves above divine notice, the other look on themselves as beneath it; extremes these, both equally derogatory to the supreme power and goodness.

Here then is an institution, which, like that great leveller we all must feel, throws down distinction; to this feast all are invited, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. There are indeed but too many of those, whom fortune has placed in a superior rank,  
who



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who affect to despise it; those whom gratitude calls on to be most thankful for benefits received, are most forgetful of their benefactor; those whose example could most influence the rest of the world, are too careless of their behaviour; or if we do now and then see them at the holy table, it is because they cannot avoid it; they are drawn by interest to a place where devotion could not carry them, and readily comply with human laws, though they have neglected the divine.

It happens in this, as in that feast mentioned by our Saviour, that the rich who are bidden, will not come; they have farms, they have wives, they have pleasures, they have vices, they pray the Lord of the feast to have them excused; whilst from the streets and lanes  
of

of the city come in the poor, and the house is filled with guests.

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This is indeed the only table, where all men of all orders, ranks and degrees, can be admitted together, where none but merit can gain us admittance, where none but innocence can ensure our welcome, and where all are sure to meet with that reward which they deserve. Let the consideration therefore of the use, the importance, the excellency of this injunction, induce us to reflect seriously on what I purposed, secondly, to lay before you,—the obligations which we lie under to perform it. And first then, This is the absolute and positive command of our great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, whom we all pretend to acknowledge as our sovereign, that general under whom we fight, and who hath therefore the undoubted right to rule over us: to re-  
fuse

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use to obey his commands, is treason and rebellion, flying in the face of him whom we have sworn to serve; him who hath power to punish or reward us: but his commands, however easy to be complied with, seem harsh and disagreeable to our perverse and obstinate dispositions; let us set the precept in a milder light; let us consider it as the last request of a dying friend, who after a wearisome and wretched life spent in our service, begs us but now and then to think of him, to call to mind his endeavour to oblige us: but this image, as indeed all must be, is far beneath what it would represent, because our blessed Saviour did more for us, for every one of us, than any one man could possibly do for another, and has therefore infinitely more right to our obedience. Can we forget a friend whose wisdom is always ready to counsel, whose power

is



is always exerted to defend us? Can we forget a friend who lived but to serve, who died but to redeem us; whose knowledge alone can make us happy here, and on whose intercession we must rely for eternal bliss hereafter? Shall we not then set apart a few hours to a grateful remembrance of that bounty to which we owe our whole lives? Can any table furnish us with such entertainment as the table of the Lord? Can any feast give us such refined, and such exquisite delight? If two or three of us come together on this occasion, our Saviour will be in the midst of us; he will preside over the feast, he will receive his guests, he will promote every good thought in us, banish every evil one, enliven our charity, and make us worthy visitants.

In



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In the purer ages of christianity, the eucharist was always a daily part of the common prayer; they who lived then never omitted an opportunity of partaking of it; and though I am far from thinking it necessary to salvation, that we should exactly follow them therein, yet surely such their zeal was infinitely preferable to the coldness and insensibility of these our days.

What are the most frequent causes of this, it is perhaps very difficult to determine: some I believe are unwilling, some are afraid, some are ashamed to communicate; the foolish man sets light by it, the weak man dreads it, the wicked man prophanes it. By daily converse with an idle, selfish, luxurious world, we contract such a levity and dissipation of thought, that we cannot without great difficulty bring back our  
wan-

wandered thoughts to any thing so solemn and so serious; that, beside the self examination required, is a disagreeable work: nothing is so irksome to an unjust steward, as to be forced to look into, and give up, his accounts; he would fain put it off, and promise by and by to settle once for all; or perhaps he says, he knows his own weakness; if he repents now, and communicates, he fears he shall sin again, and receive to himself greater damnation. Some again are of jealous, bad, and unforgiving tempers; they would approach the holy table, but they have been greatly injured, unjustly provoked, and they cannot so readily pardon.

Men, in short, never want excuses either for doing what they ought *not* to do, or leaving *undone* what they *ought*; but those things which appear right in

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our eyes, may not do so in those of God. If he gives us the opportunity of reconciling ourselves to him, and we will not accept of it, doubtless, as the Scripture expresses it, *he will repent him of his goodness towards us.*

Cast away then all unnecessary fears and frivolous excuses, all malice and hatred, all wicked and carnal desires, repent ye truly of all your sins, and resolve to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways. Let us but make the resolution, and God will strengthen it: it is better to come, imperfect and sinful as we are, to the altar, than not to come at all: God, we may rest assured, will pardon our infirmities, and compassionate our weakness: let us give him our hearts, and he will clean and purify them. If any of us then, my  
bre-

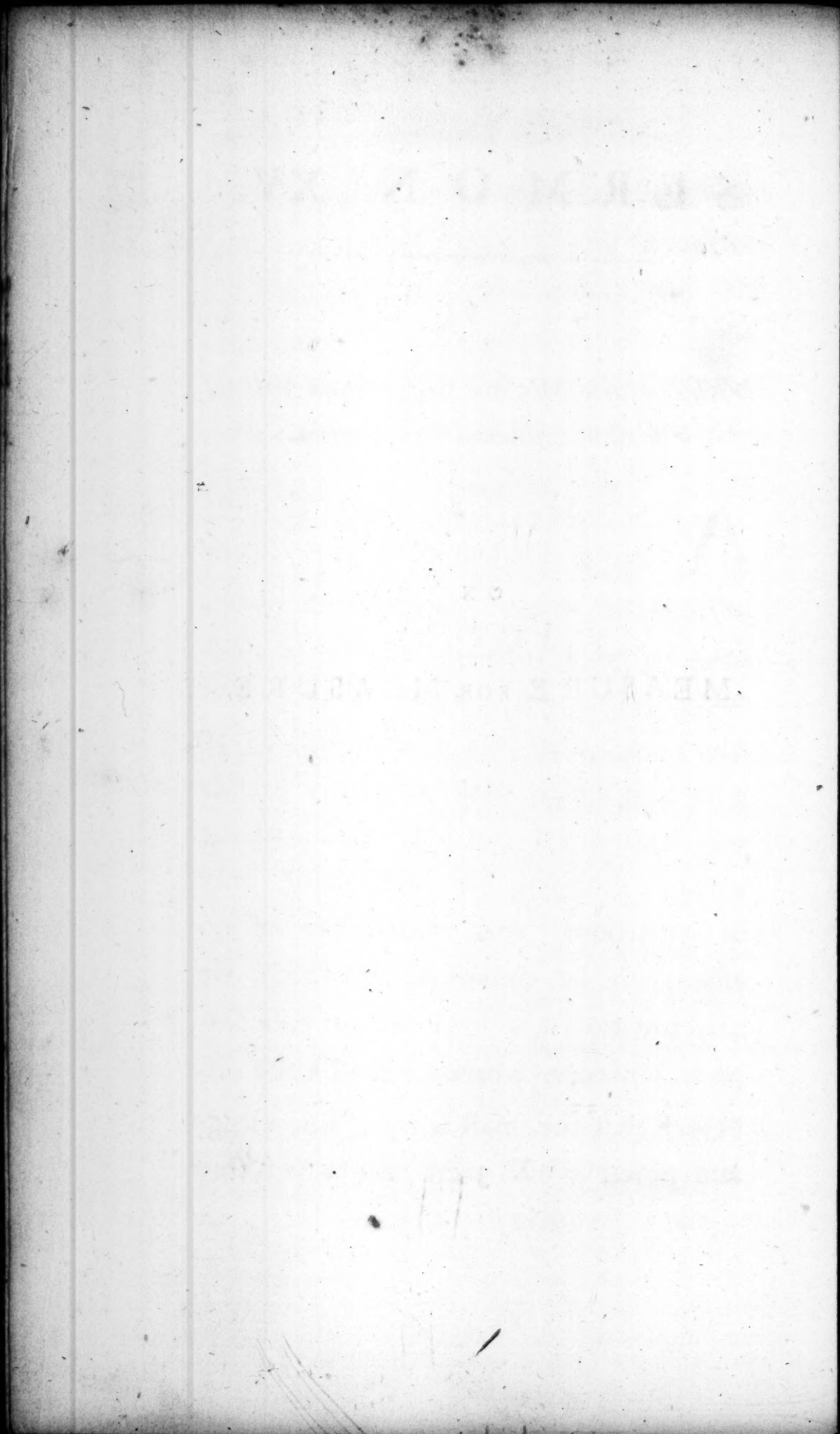
brethren, here assembled, are desirous, as many of you I hope are, of receiving the holy communion, let us, I beseech you, prepare and fit ourselves for this solemn occasion; for as God loveth the cheerful giver, so he will animate our lifeless faith, invigorate our lukewarm zeal, remove all our doubts, and strengthen all our good resolutions; if we once approach his table, he will then consider us as his guests, and will receive us with tenderness and affection; and if we behave ourselves there with becoming zeal, piety, and devotion, will one day admit us to a nobler feast in the kingdom of heaven, where all his faithful children and servants shall meet to partake of one blessed communion, in a state of uninterrupted joy and everlasting happiness.



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 and servants shall meet in a state of un-  
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 interrupted joy and everlasting happiness.

ON  
MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

X 3



# S E R M O N XV.

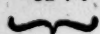
LUKE VI. 38.

*With the same Measure that ye mete withal,  
it shall be measured to you again.*

**A**MONGST all those glorious attributes which conspire to form our exalted idea of the Supreme Being, there is not one which the mind of man contemplates with more wonder and adoration, than the divine justice; as it is that which doth eminently preside over and direct the rest, and without which, omnipotence itself could only be pernicious, and omniscience of no effect; to be convinced of which, we need but turn our eyes on our own imperfect nature, where we shall easily discover, that the small share of knowledge and power which men have when they

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are not under the guidance of this nobler perfection, only stain and corrupt that character which they were meant to adorn.

The strength and wisdom of the Almighty, had of themselves been sufficient to have made the universe, but it must be his justice alone, which could so long sustain and preserve it, as it is this which holds the due balance, presides over the powers of nature, and keeps together the various parts of the great structure in their proper harmony and proportion.

And the same invariable rules, which the Creator hath himself observed, did he propose also to his creatures; he hath commanded man to be just as he is just, and pure as he is pure; and the more effectually to persuade him to the  
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imitation of his own divine conduct, he hath ordered that his happiness or misery shall totally depend upon it; he hath declared it as his fixed and unalterable decree, that as we behave towards each other, he will act towards us; or, as it is expressed in my text, *that with the same measure that we mete withal, it shall be measured unto us again.*

But though the justice of God is so manifest, though it is so essential to his nature, that it is impossible to divest him of it; it is notwithstanding an attribute which from the unaccountable perverseness of human nature, even the good and pious have sometimes been weak enough to distrust, and the evil very frequently wicked enough to call in question.

To vindicate, therefore, the ways of  
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the Almighty towards his creatures, to direct the path of the wanderer, to fix the resolutions of the doubtful, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; let us endeavour, as far as the light of reason can guide us in our inquiries, to defend the justice of God through some of its various operation, and to convince the unbeliever that it is diffused, like his mercy, throughout all his works.

And to this end it may not be improper to consider,

First, In what manner, and to what degree the divine justice is exerted in this life:

And secondly, What portion of it is reserved to fulfil the divine appointment in that which is to come.

And

And first then, with regard to that measure of the divine justice which is meted to us in this life, we may observe, that

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As much as men generally repine at the unequal distribution of things, the good even here are the happiest, and the evil the most miserable, for virtue is in a great measure its own reward.

If health, honour, peace, reputation, and trust, are pleasures, they are pleasures which the good man is seldom a stranger to. Health is the true and genuine offspring of temperance, and tranquillity the inseparable companion of innocence: the good man is always honoured, though not imitated, even by the most abandoned. Men will, in all their affairs, repose trust and confidence in those whose reputation is unblemished,  
and



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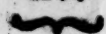
and their behaviour upright. Wisdom always repayeth her children. *Length of days is in her right-hand, and in her left, riches and honour. Great peace have they, says the psalmist, that love thy law; a peace which passeth all understanding; this peace which adds variety to wit, and grace to wisdom; that health of the soul which pours its enlivening influence over every faculty, heightens the bloom of youth, imparts cheerfulness to sickness and anguish, and gives vigour, smiles, and activity, even to age, poverty, and affliction.*

But as virtue is said, and in many cases truly said, to be its own reward, so is vice also in some measure its own punishment. (It is the character of Satan, who is the father of sin, that he is first the tempter and then the tormentor; and the features of his offspring bear the

the strongest resemblance to him. Many of our faults and follies carry with them their immediate and unavoidable consequences; they walk hand in hand, and the guilt is no sooner incurred, but it is succeeded by the reward. Thus, when intemperance walks forth to the banquet, sickness seldom fails to attend her steps, and to administer the wholesome draught of sorrow and repentance: when the haughty and self-sufficient man boasts of his imagined superiority, he generally meets with contempt and aversion: whilst the covetous man withholds his morsel from the poor, doth he not starve himself also? and whilst the angry and revengeful endeavours as much as lies in his power to destroy the peace and tranquillity of others, does he not at the same time destroy his own?

But this manifestation of the divine justice

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justice is not, it seems, sufficient to stop the clamours of the discontented, and repress the pride of the insolent. The good (for so they call themselves) are grieved to see the wicked in prosperity. Such is their impatience and indignation, that they will not wait to see the end; because the debt of the wicked is not immediately demanded, they are too apt to conclude them utterly discharged of it; and because the blow is suspended for a time, they say it will never fall upon them; because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil; and yet were we as careful to observe the judgments of God, as we generally are to watch the faults of men, what frequent reasons should we meet with to adore his impartial justice, and the execution of it! Have we never seen those who were, in  
their



their youth, ungrateful to their parents, punished themselves by the disobedience of their children? Have we never seen the plentiful harvest of fraud and rapine blasted on a sudden, and undeserved affluence and success, changed to penury and decay? Have we not sometimes seen the deceiver deceived, the contemptuous man sunk into contempt, and the magnificent structures of the proud and haughty, drop down in a moment and moulder into ruin? Can we not all of us call to mind discoveries of long-concealed guilt, such as no human means could detect, and such convictions of injured innocence, as nothing but the interposing hand of divine justice could ever have produced?

One would indeed be inclined to think a few serious reflections on the judgments of God against the wicked, even  
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in this life, would be sufficient to alarm and terrify those who had no belief in another; but if the measures of divine justice, as it is exerted here, hath no effect on the thoughtless and disobedient, let him reflect on what I proposed secondly to consider, namely, what portion of it is reserved to fulfil the divine appointment hereafter.

The unequal distribution of things in this world, is doubtless a very strong and powerful argument in favour of that which is to come: it is impossible that God, who is the fountain of perfection, should leave any thing imperfect; imperfect however must be his dispensation towards men, if that virtue which is here neglected, doth not meet with its reward, and that vice which is here successful, doth not inherit its deserved punishment (hereafter): but in this point the

the holy Scriptures are sufficiently plain and explicit. God hath there promised that he will one day reward every man according to his works, and that with the same measure we mete withal, it shall be measured unto us again. How dreadful must be the apprehensions of the sinner, when he hears this solemn, this tremendous sentence pronounced against him! when at the last and great day, the book of life shall be produced; where every action is marked down, and every syllable recorded; how dreadful will his situation be in that awful and tremendous hour, when all those whom he had injured, or defrauded, shall appear face to face, and bear witness against him! With how different an eye will the sensualist then behold the object of his lust! With what an altered countenance will the great and powerful then look upon the object of

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his ambition! How will the hypocrite avoid the sight of those whom he hath deceived and betrayed! and how will the evil speaker dread the accusing voice of those whom he hath calumniated!

But let us turn our eyes from a scene so dreadful towards its opposite, towards that consolation which the divine justice will administer to the good; an inexhaustible fountain of comfort and satisfaction to him in every station and circumstance of life: whilst God is just, the good man need not sink under his afflictions, because he may rest assured that they will one day be removed; whilst God is just, he need not repine at the success of the wicked, because he may be certain that they will <sup>at some time</sup> one day be punished: here he hath always an appeal from the partial determinations of human



human equity, here he hath an asylum to flee unto from every human injury.

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Virtue, we know, seldom appears in public, without the veil of modesty, which though it heightens her charms in the eye of the judicious, may yet conceal them from the vulgar.

If therefore on the justice of God must depend all our hopes of happiness, both here and hereafter; if we would enjoy the benefits of this divine attribute, we must ourselves aspire to the imitation of it; if we hope to be blessed, as God is blessed, we must be just as he is just, and pure as he is pure.

In all our dealings therefore with each other, we should above every thing take care to be strictly and inflexibly just before we suffer the will to give its decisive



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conclusion; we should try and examine ourselves by the great rule of action, the infallible standard and criterion of doing as we would be done unto. Men for the most part complain of the injustice of others, and at the same time do not recollect their own. God hath graciously implanted in the breasts of all, a natural justice, and a natural benevolence, and as much as we murmur against the ingratitude of mankind, it is not, perhaps, after all, so often met with, as it is complained of.

In the natural world, it is worth our observation to remark, that like always produceth like; trees, herbs, plants, and flowers, partake of the same qualities, powers and perfections, as the roots and stocks from whence they sprung; and if we rise from vegetable to animal life, we shall still perceive the same invariable

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ble similitude; and every creature by its form, its motion, and its faculties, pointing out its different originals.

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And so it is in the moral world also; love will naturally produce love; pity will beget compassion; liberality is the child of beneficence; knowledge the offspring of wisdom, and piety the parent of devotion; and on the other hand, from the seeds of hatred and animosity, springs up a plentiful harvest of discord and aversion; fraud is repaid by treachery, injustice by its oppression, and hardness of heart is recompensed by inhumanity.

Man therefore, we see, may be happy if he will: if we are kind and benevolent, and affectionate to others, they will be so to us. There are very few dispositions so sour and implacable, but a con-

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stant endeavour to serve and oblige, will soften them into complacency. God hath directed the stream of benevolence towards the various ties and connections of human life, on purpose to embellish it; from his goodness arise all those mutual charities, those tender relations, those bonds of natural affection which raise enjoyment into rapture, and pleasure into transport; all those engaging duties, the due performance of which, whilst they make us happy here, recommend us at the same time to the divine favour hereafter.

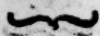
In all our connections therefore with each other, let us be humane, charitable, and benevolent; obliging if we expect to be obliged, forgiving if we expect to be forgiven. If the father expects duty and obedience from his children, he must behave with parental tenderness  
and



and affection towards them ; if the master would be served with care and fidelity, he must be just, compassionate, and kind to his servants ; if the husband expects love, constancy, and affection from the partner of his bed, he must be faithful, tender, and affectionate towards her ; if from our neighbours, from those who are in the same sphere of life with ourselves, we expect kind and friendly offices, we must on our part be always ready to return them ; if from our companions and acquaintance, we expect cheerfulness, good humour and complacency, we must exert the same social qualities towards them.

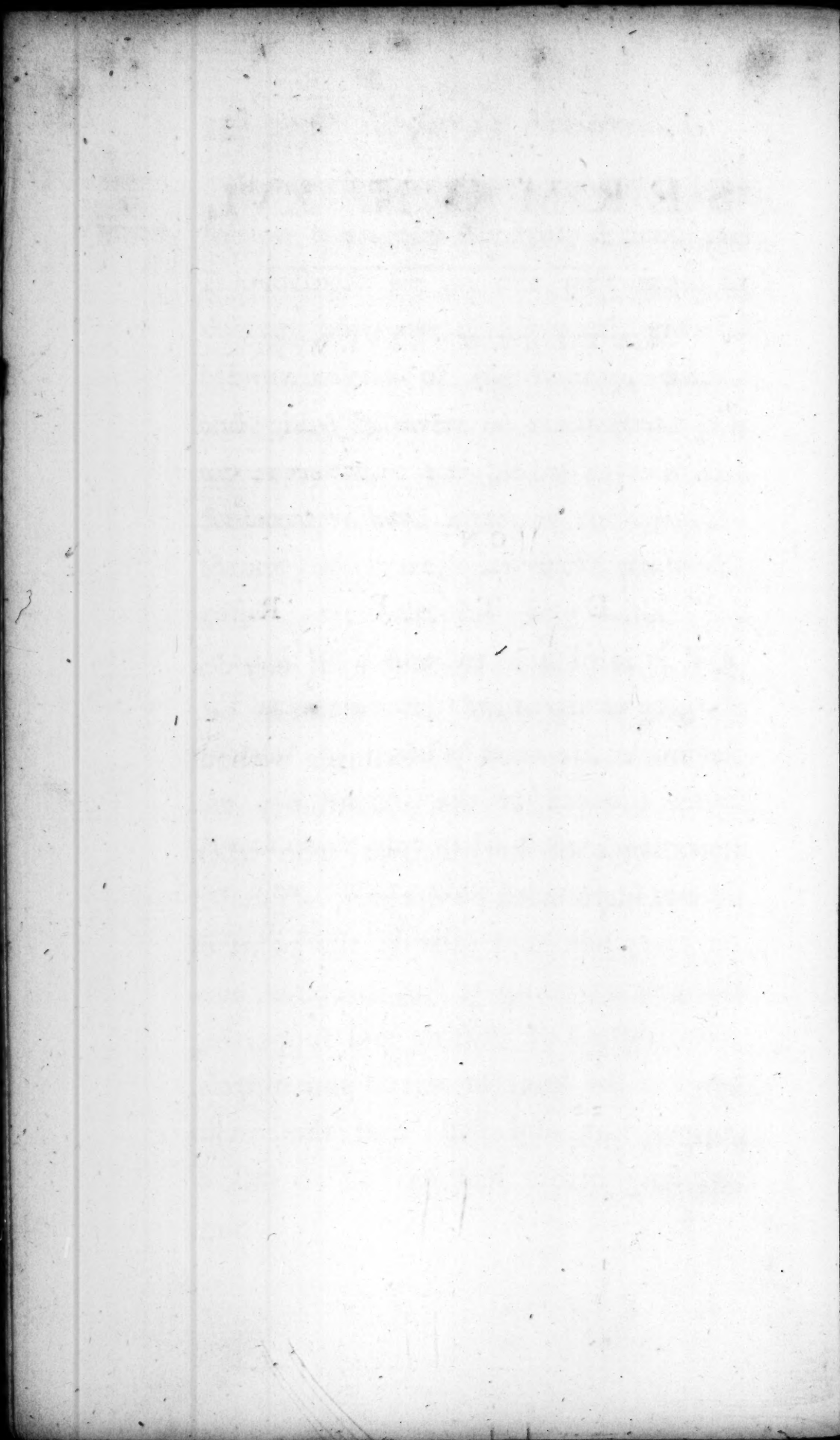
And lastly, As it is with regard to our fellow-creatures, so is it also in our relation towards our Creator ; as we act to him, he will act to us.



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If therefore we expect favour or protection from our Almighty Friend and Benefactor, we on our part must be diligent observers of his word, grateful acknowledgers of his bounty, sincere and pious followers of his doctrine ; if we expect that our blessed Saviour and Redeemer should intercede for us at the throne of grace, we must study his gospel, embrace his holy faith, and practise his divine laws ; as he hath himself informed us, that *whosoever shall be ashamed of him and of his words, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his father ;—for with the same measure that we mete withal, it shall be measured unto us again.*

ON  
P E T E R.



# S E R M O N X V I,

M A T T H E W XXVI. 75.

*Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which  
said unto him, Before the Cock crow, thou  
shalt deny me thrice: and he went out,  
and wept bitterly.*

**I**T is impossible to read with any degree of attention, the account of our Saviour's life and sufferings, without being shocked at the inconstancy and ingratitude of his disciples, who when he was surrounded by dangers, oppressed on every side, and just on the point of being delivered up to his inveterate enemies, instead of assisting and supporting him in the hour of terror and distress, forsook him and fled; that those who not long before had left all to follow him,

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him, those who had been fellow-travel-  
lers and fellow-sufferers with him, should  
thus tire at the end of the journey, and  
totally desert so good a master, was a  
melancholy instance of human frailty  
and irresolution, that must greatly asto-  
nish us whenever we seriously reflect  
upon it.

But amongst all these ungrateful and  
unprofitable servants, Peter seems to  
have acted in a manner the most inex-  
cusable.

If we consider with any degree of at-  
tention, the manner in which Peter was  
called to the ministry, the extraordinary  
trust and confidence placed in him by  
his divine master, the affection which he  
constantly expressed for him, we must  
acknowledge that he was in reality the  
last of our Lord's disciples from whom  
he

he had reason to expect that ungenerous treatment, which he afterwards received from him.

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The first connection between Peter and our blessed Saviour, was occasioned by a circumstance of so singular a nature, as must doubtless have left the strongest impression on him, such a one we should indeed imagine as could never have been effaced. The miraculous draught of fishes had, we know, so powerful an effect on the mind of Peter, that after confessing on his knees that he was a sinful man, he was immediately converted, quitted his profession, attached himself intirely to Jesus, forsook all, and followed him; our Saviour, in consequence of this behaviour, rewarded his firm adherence, by taking every opportunity of distinguishing him.

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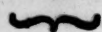
When the twelve were selected by him, and called forth from the number of his followers, to preach his gospel to all nations, we see the name of Simon, whom he surnamed Peter, standing foremost in the list; when Jesus went up into the mountain to be transfigured, he was accompanied only by Peter, and two others, who were taken, as Scripture informs us, apart by themselves, an instance, no doubt, of his partial regard and affection for them, which should never have been forgotten. Peter was probably at that time not insensible of the obligations which he had received; and made, we may suppose, the strongest resolutions of doing every thing in his power to return them. But such is the weakness of the human heart, that it is never to be relied, or depended on; there was a pride and inconstancy, and a timidity and proneness to evil in the temper  
and



and disposition of Peter, which though he was himself a stranger to, did not escape the all-seeing eye of his divine Master: he had so high an opinion, as we read in St. Mark, of his own abilities, that he even took upon him to teach and reprove his great instructor: when our Saviour taught his doctrine openly, Peter took him and rebuked him: but he, when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, in *his* turn, and with much more reason rebuked Peter, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

The severity of this reflection could only be equalled by the justice and propriety of it: he to whom all hearts were open, and all desires known, was no stranger to those peculiar weaknesses and imperfections, which his disciple was  
most



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most subject to : the reproof, it is observable, at the same time that it condemned his present behaviour, was prophetic also of his future conduct ; the same cause was naturally productive of the same effect : *Peter savoured of the things that were of men.* We are not therefore so much surprised to find, that he who rebuked his master for preaching openly, should in the end deny and desert him.

So great a regard, notwithstanding, had our blessed Saviour for this apostle, and at the same time so perfect a knowledge of his nature and disposition, that we find him on another occasion severely reprehending him for a vice, which perhaps he did not imagine himself guilty of. When Peter said unto Jesus, *We have left all and followed thee ;* Jesus turned to him and said, *Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you.* The  
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instant that Peter began to boast of his friendship, our Saviour seems to have suspected the *integrity* of it: when once pride enters into the heart of man, every virtue shrinks and diminishes at the approach of it; and the moment we begin to value ourselves on the performance of our duty, it ceases to be meritorious.

The truth of our Saviour's remark was but too exactly verified in the behaviour of Peter; for when the day of trial came, this confident and opinionated servant makes the strongest professions of friendship and attachment to his injured and oppressed master: *Though all men, says he, shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.* Then Jesus, who knew him much better than he did himself, replied, *Verily, I say unto thee, that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice;* and Peter said

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unto him, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* How faithfully he kept his word, and how religiously he fulfilled his promise, we are not now to learn; for when our blessed Saviour was given up to his enemies, betrayed, insulted, buffeted, and spit on, this zealous defender was ashamed even to be seen with him; he followed afar off, disclaimed even the least knowledge of, or acquaintance with him: *A damsel came to him, saying, thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee; but he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest: and when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth; and again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.* How naturally, though imperceptibly, doth one vice produce another! Peter, not content with having already

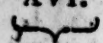


already denied his master, now adds perjury to falsehood, and to strengthen his assertion, impiously swears that he knew not the man; this, we cannot help observing, is generally the consequence of lying; those who habituate themselves to the practice of one of these vices, are seldom very careful of avoiding the other. But, behold! whilst he was pouring forth his execrations, the cock crew.

The voice of thunder sounding in his ears, could not have struck so forcibly on his imagination, as this little circumstance, which at once reminded him of his falsehood, upbraided his breach of promise, and set the whole of his base and inexcusable conduct, full before him: he was detected, astonished, abashed, and confounded, and he remembered the words of Jesus, which said



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unto him, *Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice: and he went out, and wept bitterly.*

Having thus traced the lineaments of Peter's character, and illustrated the causes of his behaviour, permit me in the remainder of this discourse, to make a few reflections naturally arising from a view of his conduct, which may perhaps be of some service to us with regard to our own.

And first then, From the example of Peter, we may learn that there is no dependance to be placed on human friendships: no reliance on human virtue; but that man is weak and unstable in all his ways. There is no doubt but that Peter had contracted a real tenderness and affection for our Saviour; but it is equally indisputable, that he had by no means

means all that friendship and regard which he professed to have. We are indeed, for the most part, such slaves to our passions, that we seldom know to what degree we love or hate, till accident and circumstance give us the opportunity of proving it, and then we generally, when perhaps it is too late, discover the weakness of our nature, and learn by experience what strangers we are to our own hearts. When Peter said he would go with our Saviour to prison and to death, he very probably at that time intended so to do; when danger is at a distance, it seems, like other objects, smaller and more inconsiderable than it really is, and is consequently with the greater ease set at defiance, but in proportion as it advances, is magnified and increased. When Jesus was pursued, persecuted, and betrayed, Peter began to dread the consequences of his attach-

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ment to him, and at the only time when his friendship for his master could have been of any service, he deserted and denied him: must we not therefore conclude that man, as I before observed to you, is weak and unstable in all his ways; and nothing is so uncertain as human friendship, and human resolution?

When Peter made our Saviour such solemn assurances, he little thought he should so soon and so openly contradict them: and thus it is with regard to every vice and infirmity of human nature. We are all of us perhaps, at some time of our lives, guilty of follies, which we did not think ourselves capable of committing: we cannot therefore entertain too humble an opinion of our own strength, powers, and abilities; we cannot too carefully avoid temptations,  
or



or whilst we stand, take too much heed  
lest we fall.

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But secondly, From the example of Peter, we may learn that confidence and self-opinion are seldom attendants on real merit; that extraordinary professions of friendship are by no means the infallible marks of truth or sincerity, but that on the other hand, they should rather be considered as a just cause of suspicion, and the prophetic indications of future falsehood. Those who are really rich, seldom boast of their riches; and those who are truly virtuous, as seldom boast of their virtue: we cannot therefore be too cautious of reposing confidence in those, whose more than ordinary zeal, and extravagant pretensions, seem over anxious to obtain it.

The circumstance before us, there-

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fore, may serve to put us upon our guard against a most pernicious doctrine, which hath of late years been zealously propagated amongst us, by the absurd enthusiasts of our age,—the doctrine of assurance. The methodists tell us, that when we are once entered into the number of the elect, when we are regenerate and born anew, Satan hath then no more power over us, no temptations can then overcome, no sins get the dominion over us: that we are then safe from all the tumultuous storms of passion, and landed in the harbour of innocence and felicity; a doctrine equally destructive of true religion with any of those which are held by the church of Rome, as it must inevitably tend to put men entirely off their guard, to encourage spiritual pride and arrogance, and withal greatly to endanger their everlasting salvation. The religion of Christ can never countenance or  
support

support such vain chimeras. God never meant that a state of humanity should be a state of perfection; but admonishes us if we stand ever so firmly to take heed lest we fall. Peter, it is to be hoped they will acknowledge, had as much reason to rely on his own firmness and integrity, as any of these pretenders to incorruptible virtue, and yet, we see, all his resolution failed, when he was called upon to exert it, and all his pompous professions of inviolable attachment ended at last in the shameful desertion of his friend and benefactor. Who shall ever glory in his sincerity, that remembers Peter's ingratitude? or who, on the other hand, shall give himself over to a state of reprobation or despair, that calls to mind Peter's repentance?

Which naturally brings us to the third and last remark, which will of course

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course suggest itself to us on this occasion, namely, that the only part of Peter's conduct worthy of our imitation, is doubtless his repentance, which we have reason to suppose was perfectly sincere. The tears which he shed, were tears of unfeigned sorrow and contrition, of which his conduct after the death of our Saviour was an indisputable proof; we find him in the remainder of his life acting the part of a diligent and faithful servant, endeavouring to atone for his past failings, by the punctual and regular discharge of his duty; tried like the rest of our Lord's disciples, by the bitterest afflictions, but distinguished by the interposition of divine power, which most miraculously delivered him from some of them.

Let then, my brethren, the example of Peter sink deeply into our hearts: let

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us carefully guard against that pride and self-sufficiency which betrayed *him* into the shameful desertion of his great Lord and Master. Never let us permit a vain and deceitful world to have such an influence over our conduct, as to persuade us to relinquish all our nobler attachments to religion and virtue. Let us not, like Peter, neglect, despise, or deny our divine Master, because he is neglected, despised, or denied by the rest of the world.

We have all of us, like Peter, made large and mighty promises to our great Lord and Master; have promised to go with him to prison, and to death, and though we die for him, not to deny him. Let us not, like Peter, when the day of trial comes, desert and betray him: let neither our words nor our actions, after this, say that we know him not.

But



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But if, after all, born with the same weakneses and imperfections, and liable to the same temptations as Peter was, we have any of us, in any part of our conduct and behaviour resembled *him*; if we have in spite of all our professions in the general course of our lives, deserted and denied him, let us at least have the merit of imitating him in his repentance also: let us go out, and weep bitterly. There is yet time, whilst we have life, to atone, in some measure, for our past conduct, by a hearty and sincere contrition to reconcile ourselves to the divine favour. If the remainder of our life is entirely devoted to his interest, and consecrated to his service, he may graciously forgive our offences, pardon our weakness, and pass over our presumption: though we have hitherto been ungrateful and unprofitable servants, neglecting his commands, denying his power, and dis-

disputing his authority, he may, notwithstanding, on our sincere contrition and amendment, take us once more under his protection, employ us in the execution of his divine commandments, and if we behave soberly, diligently, and faithfully, may yet reward our assiduity, and in the last and great day, salute us with

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*Well have ye done, my good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

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disputing his authority, he may, not-  
withstanding, our our sincere contrition  
and amendment, take us once more into  
his protection, employ us in the exe-  
cution of his divine commandments, and  
if we behave soberly, diligently, and faith-  
fully, may yet reward our assiduity, and  
in the last and great day, make us part

of his glory. I will have ye done, my good and faithful  
servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.



ON THE  
THIEF UPON THE CROSS.



THE CROSS

# S E R M O N   X V I I .

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L U K E   X X I I I .   43.

*Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be  
with me in Paradise.*

**T**H E R E is not perhaps in the whole affecting narrative of our blessed Saviour's sufferings, as related by the holy Evangelists, a circumstance more striking or extraordinary than that which is now before us; that a licentious and abandoned profligate, condemned for a crime the most atrocious, one who, as he was to die the death, had most probably lived the life of the unrighteous; that he should become so suddenly and so unexpectedly the object of divine mercy, and obtain a gracious promise from his Redeemer, not only of pardon,

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but of immediate reward, must doubtless be the subject of our admiration and astonishment; the fact notwithstanding, however surprising it may appear to us, is indisputable, nor hath indeed the truth of it, unless by those who deny the whole gospel of Christ, been ever called in question. Very different indeed have been the inferences made, and the conclusions drawn from it, according to the various prejudices, passions and opinions of men. I shall not waste your time and attention by collecting and laying before you the various interpretations of different commentators with which these words have been perplexed; but (which will doubtless be a far more useful consideration) take notice of the very improper use which habitual sinners have made of this passage, and the many idle and frivolous excuses too often brought for



for their misapplication and misinterpretation of it.

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It is indeed astonishing to reflect how many wicked and impenitent sinners fly for shelter to this sacred asylum; how many are misled by this extraordinary instance of a sudden conversion, to imagine, that as their faults and follies do by no means exceed, or even equal the guilt of such a criminal, their repentance and contrition, however late, and however imperfect, must consequently be attended with the same success: they are even too often presumptuous enough to suppose, that as the malefactor on the cross was not only pardoned, but received into Paradise, without the painful task of repentance and reformation, that the same degree of favour and indulgence may be granted them in the last period of their existence.

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But though this may have proved in some degree a matter (however groundless and unreasonable) of momentary consolation to the profligate and abandoned, who have no other reed to catch at in their desperate situation, never could it afford any rational hope to the sober and serious Christian, because there are many and most important peculiarities in the case before us, which cannot, by any sophistry or mode of false reasoning, be applied to any other.

And here, the first thing which, with respect to a general comparison, will naturally suggest itself to our imagination, is, that the penitent mentioned in my text, to whom the gracious promise of pardon and reward was given, did, we may suppose, embrace the faith of Christ, as soon as sufficient means of conviction were laid before him. It has been the  
opinion

opinion indeed of many learned writers on this subject, that this unhappy criminal knew nothing of our blessed Saviour, but what he might have collected from common report, and consequently had no better opinion of him than the unbelieving Jews, than his cruel persecutors and oppressors, who considered him, no doubt, as an hypocrite and impostor; and if so he did, the more powerful must have been his faith, and the more exalted his virtue, in that at once overcoming all his prejudices, in acknowledging that wisdom which he had contemned, and adoring that Saviour whom he had been taught to laugh at and deride; and our Redeemer might with reason have said unto him, as he did unto the Centurion, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* His heart we see was open to the first impression of grace; so far, therefore, from being

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considered as a late convert, he had rather the glory of being an early penitent; it was not inclination, but opportunity alone, that was wanting to render him a zealous believer, and a true Christian: he might therefore have some title to that pardon which he received, and some claim to that reward which his divine master had here promised to bestow upon him; and to this judgment we shall probably be more inclined, when we come likewise to consider his very uncommon and intrepid faith, in embracing our Lord at that disastrous crisis, when even those disciples and followers who had heard his blessed doctrines, and seen his divine miracles, when even those forsook him and fled; in this wretched and ignominious state, in this low and miserable condition, the unhappy fellow-sufferer throws himself on his protection, acknowledges his divinity,

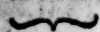


nity, believes in him as the Lord and giver of a future and better life, as the great dispenser of blessings after death: so noble and so bold a confidence at such a period, could not perhaps be equalled.

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It must indeed, on the other hand, be acknowledged as a most extraordinary event, that a public malefactor, condemned probably for some atrocious crime, to a shameful and ignominious punishment, should thus be pardoned, and rewarded by the promise of eternal happiness. This will undoubtedly appear, on the first transient view of it, an event little to be expected: and yet who can say what extraordinary circumstances, to us utterly unknown, might have recommended him to the divine favour? He might have been possessed of qualities and virtues sufficient, in the eye of a merciful Redeemer, to atone for



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all his offences; he might even, perhaps, for ought we know to the contrary, have been perfectly innocent, like our blessed Saviour himself, of the crimes for which he suffered. There are but too many instances in every age and nation, of men who have been falsely accused, and who have paid with their lives, for crimes which they have never committed. Such we know was the power of an outrageous multitude, and the prejudice of misguided zeal, that the great Saviour of mankind was nailed to the cross, whilst the impious Barabbas, who was a murderer and a robber, escaped the punishment due to his iniquities.

This, my brethren, may serve as an instructive lesson to us, never too rigidly to censure even those whom the laws have condemned, never to consider as utterly forsaken by the Almighty, those  
who

who are deserted and abhorred of men, because too many amongst us, who, to all outward appearance, have led good and exemplary lives, may, notwithstanding, have been secretly guilty of the greatest crimes; and those on the other hand, who, like the thief on the cross, have been publicly branded for the most heinous offences, may still be deserving objects of divine mercy, and become the heirs of eternal salvation.

“ To day, says our Saviour to the thief on the cross, thou shalt be with me in Paradise; thou shalt change this miserable and ignominious state, for a place of uninterrupted joy and felicity, and as thou now partakest of my sufferings, shalt soon partake of my reward also.” This, no doubt, must administer comfort and consolation to every sincere penitent, who is pierced with a hearty concern for his past offences; this wonder-

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wonderful monument of divine mercy must raise the hopes of the repenting profligate, and induce him to improve his last moments to the best advantage; but at the same time, it will highly become us to remember, that there is no resemblance between him who submits to, and embraces the first suggestions of God's grace, and him who wilfully resists them; between him who obeys the first call, and him who has continually opposed all the motions and sollicitations of God's holy spirit.

Well would it be for those who lay so uncommon, and so unwarrantable a stress on this singular and extraordinary instance, could they produce as uncommon and indisputable evidence of their imitation of his conduct, with regard to their faith and conviction. The thief on the cross acknowledged our blessed Saviour,



Saviour, when scarce any body else would acknowledge him; in that distressful and ignominious state, when even his own disciples had forsook him and fled; whilst too many amongst us refuse to own him, even in his most triumphant state, and sitting at the right hand of God.

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Let us not then, my brethren, be so partial to ourselves, from our Saviour's conduct in this particular, when our circumstances are not the same, most unreasonably to expect the same indulgence: on one side of our blessed Redeemer, we behold a saint, on the other a reprobate; why should not one therefore be as strong an argument to warn us of one danger, as the other is generally made use of to delude us into a fatal security? The blasphemous and impenitent behaviour of the one, is as manifest  
a sign



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a sign of God's dereliction, as the prayers and acknowledgments of the other can possibly be of conversion and acceptance. God's grace, he has expressly told us, shall be increased to those who improve, and withdrawn from those who abuse it; and those who have impiously rejected the means of salvation, who enter upon the great task of reformation, at a time when they are totally unable to perform it: this is doubtless nothing less than to despise the riches of God's grace, not considering, as we ought, that his goodness, instead of treasuring up to us wrath against the day of wrath, should lead us to a Godly sorrow for our sins, and a sincere repentance of them.

Upon the whole then, if to day, whilst it is called to day, we do the work of it, and perform every moral and religious duty

duty that is required of us, we may then receive some consolation, from a review of the circumstance and situation of the example now before us: but if, on the other hand, we postpone our repentance from day to day, and from year to year; if every added period of life but brings along with it a confirmation in evil habits, and an indifference with regard to the one thing needful, we shall doubtless, by this unwarrantable delay, but increase our guilt, and heighten our condemnation.

The present solemn season seems to demand of us a more than ordinary attention to every religious duty, when we are called upon, as it were, to attend our divine Master to the cross, to lament his sufferings, and to partake them with him.

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Knowing then, that it is now high time to awake out of our sleep, let us cast off the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, & the danger and difficulty of a death-bed repentance, we all see and know, but the extent of our lives we must all be strangers to; we cannot depend, either on the power or the will to undertake this great and necessary work; neither can we, after all, rest assured that so imperfect a recompense, so unequal a satisfaction, will ever be accepted; the utmost that we can flatter ourselves with the hope of, is, that we need not totally despair.

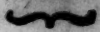
*Let then the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him immediately turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.*

That



That repentance, which the thief on the cross sincerely felt, may we ourselves immediately experience; that full and implicit faith which he had in our blessed Saviour, may we immediately embrace; those intentions of future piety and goodness which he could only form, may we live to execute; and that Paradise, which on the completion of our Lord's gracious promise, he undoubtedly obtained, may we all in his good time live to inherit, through the merits and mediation of our blessed Lord and Redeemer.

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That repentance, which the Lord on  
the cross of Calvary, has made us  
immediately acquainted with, that full and  
imperfect faith which he has in our hearts  
for the redemption of the immediately con-  
fessed, those intentions of our re-  
pentance, which he would only form,  
may we live to see them, and that full  
and perfect completion of our  
Lord's gracious promise, the undoubt-  
edly certain, may we all in his good  
time live to inherit, through the merits  
and mediation of our blessed Lord and  
Mediator, the Father, the Son, and the Holy  
Spirit, in unity and in love.

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